THE WEIRD OF "THE SILKEN THOMAS."

CROM A BOO!

BY
R. MANIFOLD
CRAIG.

AS YT IS TAKYT.

THOMAS FITZGERA

OAK ST. HDSF

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THE WEIRD OF "THE SILKEN THOMAS"

AN EPISODE OF ANGLO-IRISH HISTORY. TOGETHER WITH SOME ROMANTIC ACCOUNT OF THE HUMBLER HISTORY (BUT GREATER HAPPINESS) OF MARTYN BARUK FALLON, SCRIVENER, AND CRIPPLE, SOMETIME UNOFFICIALLY IN THE FOLLOWING OF THE FITZGERALDS, IN THEIR TOWN OF MAYNOOTH, IN IRELAND.

A.D. 1532 *TO* 1537

THE WEIRD OF "THE SILKEN THOMAS"

AN EPISODE OF ANGLO-IRISH HISTORY

BY

R. MANIFOLD-CRAIG

AUTHOR OF

"THE SACRIFICE OF FOOLS," "A WIDOW WELL LEFT," "ALL TRUMPS," "LANTY RIORDAN'S RED LIGHT," "A TORN-OUT PAGE" (COLLABORATION), "LADY SALOME'S SILVER WEDDING," ETC. ETC.

ABERDEEN

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5 My 23 HALLE'S

Dedicated to

HIS GRACE, THE DUKE OF LEINSTER,

BY PERMISSION OF HIS UNCLES,

LORD FREDERICK FITZGERALD,

AND

LORD WALTER FITZGERALD.

436284

Lord Thomas FitzGerald's Inscription:

"AS YT IS TAKY$_T$"

That is:

"Take things as they are,—as they come."

ERRATA.

Page 72, last line, for "Just when his ard d putation" etc., read "Just when this hard deputation" etc.

Page 53, line 8, should read, "I was borne" etc.

Page 204, line 28, for "roll" read "rolls."

THE WEIRD OF "THE SILKEN THOMAS"

CHAPTER THE FIRST

HOW THE STORY OF MURTAGH ENROUSED MARTYN, THE CRIPPLED SCRIVENER, TO THE ZEAL OF WRITING THE HISTORY AND MATTER OF THE FITZGERALDS OF HIS TIME, ESPECIALLY OF HIS OWN MAIMING

As I, Martyn Fallon, the scrivener, sat this morning at my windore, crippled as I am by the old trouble of the back, the wondrous man who hath been my close friend for the years of my ailing, said in half-tones to my dear Aunt Vimbela, of the sweet voice :

"Doth Martyn know, Vimbela?"

My aunt, with a hasty look at me, shook her head for the answer : "Nay."

Then Murtagh was silent for a time. But at the last, slowly rising (and as he passed by the ladder to his room above), he said :

"Tell him!"

With some delay (and some unwillingness, as it seemed to me), my aunt told me of Murtagh.

The habit with many in our county is to speak of my friend as "Mad Murtagh." Verily, were it true in the very littlest that any madness abode in him, it would only be because of his "much learning," as was said aforetime of the Blessed and Holy Saint Paul!

But of all the Saints in the Calendar, his favourite was the Holy Forerunner, St. John. To him Murtagh likened himself as much as might be, in all his ways and teachings. He loved loneliness in the wilderness so greatly that we had some strain of urgence to win him from dwelling in the woods, where he had no company but the little Jacob Ranstraw, of whom more anon. And because he could not attain unto raiment of camels' hair, he was clad in the skins of goats.

By about the time which I have passed in the telling of so much of my quaint friend, Vimbela had paused after sitting by the side of my couch.

Then she obeyed the command of Murtagh; and told me what here followeth, which is his story of himself to her.

Murtagh, he of the sad and beautiful face, was, she said, the offspring, without wedlock, of a Butler of Ossory, who had won to his purpose one who loved much, that was the niece of a priest in that part.

When the unhappy Oona gave him birth, she was alone by the Cill Dara, or Church of the Oak, from which the county takes name. And, as lacking proper help, or by the bitterness of her shame, she died.

And well-nigh dead, too, was the little one, when the poor priest, wandering in search of his dead brother's child, found the babe wrapped in her garment, and lying, cold, upon her cold bosom.

The priest flung himself upon his trembling knees, first to pray in a few words, and then to curse the family of the seducer. But the frail infant, moved with hunger, feebly raised three fingers, and seemed to look up into the sky.

Thereupon the priest cried aloud:

"Out of the mouth of a babe, O Lord! have I to learn that the Vengeance is Thine?"

. . . . . .

He took the living child home, and speedily gave it warm milk, watered, and with honey. Laying it at such peace as he could contrive, he returned for the poor mother's body. The same was decently interred in a spot near to a sacred well, in the oak copse.

The child was exceeding frail and thin until his eleventh year. He was ever fond of solitude. He was a lover of animals. It was a vast wonder how they all—the wildest to others—came to his hand!

Books, too, were his delight. And for bodily exercises he gave many hours of every day.

He could repeat all the prophecies of Columkille, and the other seers. He so studied the faces and the voices of men and women, that he seemed to read their inmost thoughts. My aunt's much older sister (a nun at heart, but never veiled because of family duty) had been Murtagh's nurse. Truly he loved us all.

When the priest judged him old enough, he told him the story.

Murtagh sprang to his feet, and called for the name of the abominable destroyer of his mother, so that he might slay him!

"Ah, he is thy father!" whispered the priest.

"He is no more my father, for his safety, than I am his son in his mind, and by his acknowledgment and honours!" shouted Murtagh: "I shall slay him!"

"My poor son!" murmured the priest, "I was of that mind when I found thee, fifteen years ago! But the Sign of the Blessed and Holy Trinity upon thy feeble and tiny fist warned me to commit the revenge to God. Do so thou thyself, also. He will repay!"

So Murtagh bowed his head, and made the Sign of the Holy Cross. Thenceforward, a Butler was safe from Murtagh, although he would not hold much of converse with them.

But all his loyal love was at all times for the Geraldines.

There was not a power he had (or an use to which he could apply the thoughts of him held by the people), but it was at the service of the great family of Maynooth.

Indeed, the one other ruling motion of his soul was his love for that same Aunt Vimbela who drew her narrative of our friend to an end with a sigh—with a warning to keep the secret which had been trusted to me; and with a kiss upon my brow, as she asked me could she in any wise serve me?

To which I answered with a smile, and: "Nay, sweet aunt!" But my sympathies were with my dear friend,

Murtagh of the goat-skins, whose sad and solitary ways seemed of more reason for this explication at his desire.

. . . . . .

Having meditated so much of Murtagh, my thoughts have turned somewhat in upon myself, that used to be the strong and swift companion of him, and of the young Lord Thomas, the eldest son of our noble Earl of Kildare, in all sports, and toils, and exercises. Even at that good time of my strength, the task of accompts and figures was neither dry nor irksome to me. Also (as I know one who can relieve the head pain by a long casting-up of totalments—so) the work of scrivenery hath been my best resource in the weariness of my bedridden time. Yes! that labour of pen-wagging—a terror to some—hath oftentimes been my restful dreamland, wherein pain ceaseth, or, at the least, is clean forgot for the moment.

"In the days of my strength!"

It is a sad wording. For then had my young Lord but one rival with long-bow, or cross-bow—one whom this poor writer cannot with modesty name. But, 'od's sooth! I owe nothing of grath to that new art of shoulder-gunning. Many raids upon the herds and the homes of the Lord Earl's enemies had safely meant fat meat and clairtie wine for us; and the greatest woe I had ever known had been the swinging fall that came of holding on too long, or, more truly, too briefly, to a young bull's tail; or the wallowing in a bog-ditch, because that pursuit had been too eager. Thereat, none laughed merrier than he that fell!

But, forsooth, needs must my Lord Thomas call upon me to thunder off his great shoulder-gun at a murthering

bull which he had wounded, and much enraged, with his cross-bow. It may be, as they say, that I held the Devil's pointing-engine ungainly. I know not. But this I do know: the bull himself had been a gentler visitor at my breast-bone than the wood end of the hand-cannon was when the finger-rod yielded. The bull, I record, fell dead, headlong.

Yet it was by some displacement of my back in the fall, and not by the blow itself, that I had greatest hurt. To this day, for all of blood-letting, and red-hot irons, and toad's blood, and starvation, and all that wise women and doctoring priests could do at the time, I have not taken again my strength; and I see only small hope thereof!

To be sure, when the great Chirurgeon, Donough, son of Owen (called in general "O'Donlevy") died, in the September of A.D. 1527, and his successor wrote to my Lord, making tender of his services to him, his family, and followers—I little thought, as I draughted my Lord's reply, how I myself should, first of us all, be beholden to his Honour of pestle and porringer! And that within three years, too. But my Lord Thomas would not hear less than that the cunning man should be sent for.

"Would that we could only get the mighty Linacre himself to seek repair mine injury of you, my good and dear Martyn!" he said.

So that, at large charges too, the learned successor of Donough came, and by day and night for a week he physicked and mauled. To my utter outwearying, but to none effect in benefit. Even otherwise.

And so I am MARTYN BARUK FALLON, Scrivener, and cripple—at your service!—unto this day.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

IN WHICH MARTYN BARUK FALLON, THE CRIPPLED SCRIVENER, ESSAYETH TO STIFLE HIS DISCONTENT BY FURTHER RECORDING HIS OBSERVATIONS OF MURTAGH, LORD T. FITZGERALD, AND THE BARD, O'NELAN.

It is the 8th August, in the year of our Salvation, one thousand five hundred and thirty-two.

I, the crippled clerk, Martyn Fallon, do sit at my windore, and look out upon the market-place of the town of Maynooth.

My Lord Earl of Kildare, son of Garret More, the great earl, hath this day come back to Ireland in high honour and authority. And his own town, this Maynooth, is holding high revels to welcome him.

If I do let to pass so great and memorable an occasion for the beginning of mine intended writing, I am forever likely to lack as good. It is the Lord Earl's third return in triumph, and the greatest of them all.

"Mad Murtagh," as the gifted man is called, is declaiming to the people, clad in his strange, savage dress of goat-skins.

"If ye cheer," crieth he, "let it be in all moderation. Rejoice with trembling! At a near day it may be yours to wail and weep. I, who love the dog of a Geraldine, do

advertise ye that even this day is a season for the chuckling of the Earl's cunning enemies. It is the day for the fears of the wise amongst those who are friendly to him. His Lordship's best friends will give him the softest welcome."

A circle is made around Murtagh and voices call loudly for his meaning. In one mood the kernes fear Murtagh as a prophet and miracle worker; whilst more openly they affect to slight him as one crazed. But for a while the looks of all fall away from Murtagh. My Lord Thomas, of the FitzGeralds, companied by O'Nelan, the bard of the family, moves towards the gathering.

With a smile for all, he meets a hundred smiles. He is beloved exceedingly.

My brother Charles, the junior priest (who hath been acolyte in the Chapel of my Lord since first he could swing a censor, and who is now private cleric there), he keepeth all household accompts with mine unofficial aid. He hath ever informed me that my Lord Thomas is still all that may be of rarely gifted for his twenty years, and hath a great grath and consideration for Murtagh.

This last opinement, at all events, is even now confirmed to mine own eyes as I sit here at my windore. For as the people doff their bag-caps, or pull the forelocks of their unkempt hair, my young Lord, so tall, so personable, so amicable of countenance, and so splendid of habiliment because of the great and hopeful occasion, doth raise a hand. All are as silent as the satisfied lambs that have let fall the empty and limp dugs.

"Please ye, good my people," he saith, in words which

roll full and rich to my windore; "be advertised on this happy occasion, when my Lord and dear father returneth for the third time from answering for himself before the English King and Council, that my friend Murtagh shall have such a good hearing as one is worthy of who is the friend of you all; too many faithful words hath he uttered in our hearings. None were ever for malice or injustice to man or beast!"

A murmur runs among the people: "Yea! heed the young Lord! A hearing for Murtagh!"

"Murtagh of the goat-skins!" saith a woman-voiced, old, wizened man that feared Murtagh; whereat the people laugh.

But one discordance is there.

"Why hear the crazy carlin, good my Lord?" saith a surly voice. "He hath but evil to promise, and (to believe him) this festival of thy noble father's third return is but the beginning of evil days for us."

"Peace, Patrick Cannon!" saith Lord Thomas, in sterner tones than it is his wont to use. "We may not know all the future as regards faith and service from thee and thine; but a Geraldine is on solid ground when he dealeth with Murtagh."

Then Cannon scowleth, and slinketh away, much groaned at; and the people having heaved Murtagh roughly, but kindly, and for a wider hearing, upon a cart, the prophet openeth his speech thus:

"My Lord Thomas, after that I have commended myself dutifully unto thee, I bid God's speed to this jovial and loving company. Verily, I wish thee and them all joy of

the day that is in it, and all the happiness of your Lordship his presence with them.

"Beshrew me, sir, if I have even the smallest desire to put a gloom on the morning which bringeth home, in his plenitude of power, the noble Earl, our mighty Lord and master. It will indeed be of good to the sore eyes to see him once more, so far as I may speak personal of thy loved father, our high patron and friend.

"But it hath been borne in upon me in the whispers of them that watch by me in the night that both he and we should now have a care, because of the very smoothness of the way! It is a cruel fate, I fear me, which hath stretched it deceptfully before his feet. It is fair-seeming, but treacherous, like a thin ice on a deep bog-sludge.

"That is my message, good my Lord."

"Man!" crieth O'Nelan, the Harper of the Geraldines, "why should we any longer give open lugs to thine unreason and thy maunderings? Say, what time of returning of our Lord Earl is this current?"

"The third, Bard!" shout many triumphing voices.

The Harper often taught the people by these questions. Murtagh is silent.

"Ye say rightly. He first went to England, for account of his doings by the malice of his jealous enemies, in the spring of the year one thousand five hundred and nineteen. He first returned at the same season of the year twenty-one. And how had he passed the two years? He that went as a culprit under charges was continued in the Sassenach country as a cousin of kings. As the frost upon the spider's web melteth down before the sun, from semblance of fern-

leaf and lace to diamond beads, so vanished all wherewith the jealousy of his peers or the malice of the Cardinal could attaint the Lord Earl."

The people thrill to the passionate words of the Bard; and a shout of praise rings clear out of the silence.

"But was there not more?" querieth the speaker.

"At that gorgeous meeting, which, for its magnificence, men called the Field of the Golden Cloth, who was their Lily, with more than a Solomon's glory; their Rose, even amongst the rose-garden of the English, and others? Even he whom jealous foes whilome wished to shorten by a head, as they would a thistle before seeding-time, lest it should sow a farther casting of mischief?"

Only the soft murmuring of the people's praises.

"Nay!" shouteth O'Nelan, "I but trifle, giving time to these mere gauderies. For did not our Lord the King take the Earl, then a widow-man by the loss of the tender Lady-mother of his Lordship, here present, and give him to wife the noble Lady his present beloved spouse, she being His Majesty's own cousin, the Lady Elizabeth Grey! Two years thereafter he was Deputy.

"Well, and why should I weary the winds with the story which even the birds on the roof do know?

"In the year 'twenty-seven he was hailed again to London, and had the cold comfort of London Tower. Then, too, had he the bluffings of my Lord Cardinal; and the digestion of the reports sent after him by Alen, the Archbishop, and eke the namesake, who was Chancellor. Yet Lammastide of the year of Grace, 'thirty, saw him again back, and all Dublin and its Council laying a fulsome

welcome at his feet. Why, Martyn Fallon, the scrivenery-man, gave me sight of a fair copy of Sir William Skeffington's speech, in reply to Recorder Fitzsimons, when the same gave welcome to the Lord Earl upon the Green at St. Mary's Abbey. Therein did Sir William[1] beslaver the very grass at the Earl's feet with his praises and his professed love. Yet at the Easter of this year of Our Lord, present, the foolish jealousy of that same Skeffington, and others, took the Earl of Kildare to London. Lo! this hath been the shortest sojourn of all. Each one of his enemies hath gone down before him, Cardinal and officer alike! In July last of this current year he was named Deputy in the room of his treacherous enemy; and we are here, for the glory of his third, his greatest home-coming, this happy August day.

"Whereupon—and this shall be mine excuse for a so-tedious homily—our well-intending neighbour, Murtagh, hath taken occasion to put a skeleton at your feast!

"Judge between us this hour! I have spoken!"

. . . . . .

I shall not, in all my days, forget that scene!

The people had been played upon by the Harper, even as he playeth upon his harp. A cheer rent the air. Many threw up their pointed caps. Not a few waved branches and coloured cloths.

The cart upon which dear Murtagh stood swayed in the moving of the crowd, which my Lord Thomas FitzGerald (or-wise Lord Offaly) perceiving, he stepped alongside, and said:

[1] A copy of this speech is given in an Appendix.

"Thou hast not the poetical gifts of the great Bard, good Murtagh. But thine affection to us-ward, the family of my dear Lord and loved father, is as well known unto us as even the name of O'Nelan himself. Hast thou aught to say upon this history which he hath so movingly told us for the edifying and remembering of the young about us? Say on, then, but briefly, for I have somewhat of good cheer to offer for the fuller memory of the day."

Then at last, when the people had moved back from the cart, save two, which sat upon the yoke-bars to save the same from tilting, Murtagh made ready to speak. Slowly he let fall his arms that had been folded; slowly he raised his face, which had hung downwards. One great cloud was passing with a mighty state and slowness across the Lammastide firmament.

The silence even might have been felt.

Some trembled. A woman crooned a little to her unresting infant. The Harper leaned forward, more frowning in awe and wonder, than sneering as in his whilome pride of eloquence.

The twittering of a hedge-sparrow seemed impious. One almost looked around with blame of the small fowl.

As for me, my frail heart throbbed at mine ears. And Murtagh, with hand and face now both upraised, began:

"I see, albeit with eyes that are not mine own; and what I see is death and blood!

"I see, and lo! trust is met with treachery.

"I hear great swelling words of triumph; but they fade off into echoes of despair; and the moans of hearts that are broken in pieces."

Murtagh paused; his ecstatic gaze ended. Rubbing his eyes, as though to wipe off some evil vision, he looked gently around with a sad smile, and murmured in soft tones, which yet seemed better to reach my windore than the practised loudness of the Bard:

"Welcome the Lord Earl. But let it be as one that, for all his great deserts, is only favoured for the moment by the powers of weak and most erring humanity. Have dutiful pride in his honours, more than all of which he hath well deserved. But remember whence they have come. Good water floweth not from a polluted spring.

"But, solemnest of all, I conjure you listen (you who have the Earl's ear) to this last word. Aforetime, my Lord of Kildare could blame for his troubles a jealous minister, or a rival in violent deed. But in the time to come he will have only himself to blame. His old and avowed foes are out of his way; but of a truth they were not his worst!"

What further Murtagh might have said I know not.

But at this point a sound of cheering was heard at a distance. From the farthest turn of the road some youths came running at great speed. As soon as their shouting could reach, they were heard telling that the Earl's calvacade was within sight.

Then Murtagh stepped lightly down from the cart and disappeared.

But, in a loud voice, Lord Thomas cried out:

"For celebrating the return of the noble Earl of Kildare as Lord Deputy of Ireland, an ox will be roasted whole in the market-place this evening, whereon I pray that you and yours will sup at eight of the clock!"

In the time of one minute, the market-place was as empty for some hours as a bubble of soap. I was left to meditations.

Then came the slaughterers and kitchenmen and scullions from the Castle. They bore wood and turf and a coal of living fire before a great carcase of an ox, as promised for the roasting whole.

And, indeed, their doings had to content me for mine amusement, inasmuch as my Lord went away to the Castle otherwise than through the market-place; and I saw him not.

Later, a heavy rain and thunderstorm coming on, the flesh being less than one half roasted, extinguished the fire and soddened the meat, which, besides, was smutted and befouled by smoke. So many fled supperless home, but some hacked joints and portions off for use at their own fires.

There was much roystering around the countryside that evening, and some quarrelling, too, I ween.

But of all the remembrances of the day upon which I made this writing, none dwelleth more deeply on my mind than the bearing forth of a strong man who had died from the sweating sickness; or, it may be, the looking upwards of Mad Murtagh, as he cried out that he saw only "blood—death, and blood!"

CHAPTER THE THIRD

A DULL HISTORY OF WHY THE EARLS OF KILDARE HAD BEEN SO OFTEN HAILED TO ENGLAND, ALWAYS COMING BACK IN RENEWED CREDIT. BUT IT IS ENLIVENED, NEARING THE END, WITH WORD OF LORD THOMAS AND HIS BETROTHAL TO THE DEMOISELLE, FRANCES FORTESCUE. SO THAT A PATIENT READER HAD AS WELL TO WRASTLE WITH IT

THE Junior Priest at the Castle, my good brother Charles, doth find his cheer in acquainting me of all that falleth out in the family, standing at my bedside, whiles that I cast up his tallies and expendings.

It is now the morning after the Earl's home-coming, and in the ordering, providing, preparing, and accompting of the past week, he is well-nigh distraught.

For compensation of that great injury to my back, of which I have before given some account, I have, and may be let again to boast of it, some skill in accompts, and I easily help Charles.

Upon this third returning (no less!) from the heckling of the King, his Councillors, in London, it is thought that the Earl is a mightily changed man.

He is soured, beyond the risings of an ordinary enmity, by the secrecy and treachery of the form in which men who

had lushed at his board had prepared the charges against him.

Within half a day of his arrival he hath deposed Archbishop Alen from his office of Chancellor.

The same had been his enemy, his spy; and had been, further, domestic Chaplain to Wolsey.

But, in sooth, it were small marvel that the Earl should be thus changed, and thus severe in power.

The working of affairs to which men are customed in England differeth from their conditions here, abroad, in Ireland.

The English Pale—by command—affecteth the dress, language, and laws of England. True!

But can a land of many kings aforetime, now in these ends of days, forget the practice of skirmish and raid, the right to war upon an offending rival or an unallied holder of rich lands, and flocks, and herds, houses and chattels?

And with Princeship in the Lord Earl's blood, with rivalries for an heritage, told him in the words in which he learned human speech—shall the Earl be blamed that he harried the lands of Ossory? or any Geraldine who heads a few gallowglasses in a scamper after a Butler? I trow not!

Now, forsooth, these three times hath our great chieftain been summoned away to account for himself for all this, like a culprit.

Let King or Cardinal, who cavilleth at Kildare's excursions and punishments, come hither and prove that prominence of place can otherwise be kept in such a country than as Kildare doth contrive it. Outside the English

Pale, aforesaid, there are sixty native chieftains, and thirty who are of English, or even of Scottish, strain.

O'Nelan has often, by his custom of speaking to the people, passed on to the unlearned the traditions and narrations which will one day make history. But I hap to have now here before me words of my Lord's speech to the Lord Cardinal in the year 1526, as followeth:

"Little know you, my Lord, how necessary it is, not only for the Governor, but for every nobleman in Ireland, to hamper his uncivil neighbours in things wherein, if they waited for process of Law, and had not those lives and lands within reach, they might hap to lose their own lives and lands without Law. . . . You are be-Graced and kneeled unto; but I find small grace with our Irish Borderers if I cut them not off by the knees!"

Within these two years we have had, to the glory of God, and to the terror of men, three blazing stars!

Some—amongst whom, however, is not our wise Murtagh—say how the same do presage that the world hath ripened and mellowed for a quicker ending. Only God knoweth!

But I am on safer ground when I say, with the Bard, how that each of my Lord's returnings hath pointed to the triumph of his fluent explanations at the foot of the thron . My Lord's power is now, at all events, at its zenith, with neither Skeffington nor Wolsey to say him nay in any matter!

Yet doth my brother Charles find my Lord Kildare changed in personal bearing more than things of governance do explain.

At one hour, exalted and puffed up, of loud speech and

high-vaunting self-fulness. At another, all that can be of brooding, of sigh, of sadness! This moment ready to run with fire and sword from the mid-counties to the sea; the next, timorous over the enfortment of his several castles and strong places, or questioning in whispers as to the kernes and gallowglasses of the nearest petty chieftain!

And then, as regards his family, how doth he not keep them at unrest in all things! For his heir, to wit, my brother Charles, doth give me this sample: the same (last) night of his arriving, when supper had finished, the father smote the son on the shoulder cheerily, and declaimed:

"Well, son Thomas, of a truth, if thou hadst seen, as I did, how men fell off with the sweating sickness, thou wouldest not with lightness of heart behold the year of manhood so near approached, and thou, mine eldest-born son, unmated for the begetting of an heir direct unto us! Odsooth, man, life is uncertain everywhere; and the maiden, Frances Fortescue, is all thou couldest desire in beauty, or I in fresh blood for the Geraldines, or our dear Gerald for a sister! Thy new-fangled shoulder-gun taketh thee full often to the woods for pheasants, or to the stubble for partridges or hares, I learn. Nay, nay! I chide thee not. And thy hawking is not, I know, fallen off, or thy military exercising with our friends and the followers. Thou hast done well in mine absences, and thy sisters speak well of thy fatherliness and good arrangements. All that is well, dear son; but what I lightly began with, let me now take earnestly in hand to council on."

"Here," saith Charles, "the Earl, leaning heavily upon

my Lord Thomas his shoulder, led him away in close and long conference."

Around the great Hall, and thence now through one corridor, and now through another, these two strode, with slow and equal steps, until it was nigh time for retiring.

Then, all assembling by command in the principal family living-room, it was made known unto the family and household that an alliance was to be sought between my Lord Thomas of the one part, and the Damozel Frances, daughter of Sir Adrian Fortescue, of the other, the same being of Seldon, in the County of Suffolk, England.

"Now, therefore," said the Earl, "although I may not ungallantly assume that the honoured and high-born Lady (whom I name bowing) will of a certainty jump down, unooed, to the beckoning of even our son, here present, Lord Thomas FitzGerald, yet, methinks, when the same my son, who hath warmly and dutifully subscribed his willingness thereunto, shall use his tongue to the purpose of making gift of his heart, there is good reason to hope that the answer will be as fair, if possible, as the Lady who will make it! Which fair answer, as I am humbly and proudly commissioned to advertise, will have the especial countenance, furtherance, and high goodwill of our Sovereign, the King.

"I therefore conjure all here present under shelter of the roof, the shield, and the right hand of a Geraldine, to look upon this auspicious matter as upon a thing settled, or until a hearing to the contrary; and all from now will order themselves accordingly."

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

HEREIN IS ALL THE HEART OF MARTYN FALLON, AS IT TOUCHETH THE SAME OF HIS LOVE, MOINA! HE PLEADETH GUILTY TO THE CHARGE OF SELFISHNESS IN HER REGARD, BUT DOTH NOT EVEN TAKE HOPE FROM THE PROPHECY THAT WHEN SOME UNLIKELY THINGS HAVE HAPPENED, HE MAY DANCE AT HIS OWN WEDDING. YET MURTAGH THINKETH BRAVELY UPON IT ALL

HAD it not been for the tender matter of my dear heart, Moina, I perhaps could feel the placid content which all would seek to bring to me. In my windore, seeing how I sit thereat so much, my young Lord had this new glass-sheeting put, so that with rain and tempest without, I have the light of day and calm and warmth within, although there is only yellow horn in the Castle windores.

The children—and when companied by their mothers, the maidens also—do bring me flowers and wild fruits. For matter of fact, they bring me many a secret therewith, to be writ large for their lovers at distances, and I have to reason with myself at times—as, have I right to know much that comes to me without passing the same to their dames of school, their mothers, or their sires?

God forgive me if I err in the matter, but always my leaning is toward the assisting of lovers!

And so, with all the volumes of my Lord Kildare's several book-rooms open to me through Charles, and with many kind visitors—the welcomest being Moina and Murtagh—and with my dear Aunt Vimbela of the beautiful voice to make my house homely, and of much comfort, I have but one great melancholy upon me.

It is Moina—my Moina—to whom I am betrothed, and who hath my whole heart, as I have all hers, she sweetly doth assure me!

Yet who can blame or reproach her father (who in any hap loveth his sweet child with a true father-passion which would make him jealous that she should be won from him) —if he now girneth that she reserveth herself for me? I am her loving servant, indeed, but capable of little service of housebandship!

"Though I be your father," he hath said, "thou art a personable colleen; and the boldest boys of the borders scowl at each other because of thee. Hath not Donlevy's successor said that nought under a miracle can restore that poor Martyn to helpfulness again? By the Rood! I shall call upon him to leave what he cannot gather. That verily shall I!"

"Father!"—(I know that Moina replied so, but not from her)—"it were cruel to taunt poor Martyn with the heaviness of the Good Hand of God! When he had health and hope, and all prospect, with strength beyond all our youths, he laid all, and himself and his bright future, at my feet. Nothing was then too good for Moina—and thou

wert satisfied. And shall we now give him, with his misfortunes, such sorrow and despite as . . . ?"

"Good girl, thou art besotted! All misfortunes are in the same basket in such a case as this. The same that bed-rides him, deprives him of you to wife. The matter is all of the size of a penny in his back; but its correcting is not in your hands, or in mine. Now, therefore, when Feargus—"

"Father! bid me marry, and I shall obey thee, as unto God; or bid me be single, and I shall do no less. But there my duty of obedience must have end. If I marry, it must be with Martyn only; and his misfortune becomes half mine. If I may not marry, it must only be because I may not marry him. It is I, and not thou, dear father, who have to live mine own life. I must live it in mine own way!"

So saying, my brave one bowed to her father; and, taking up her missal and rosary, she kissed The Cross in each, and signed It on her bosom.

Since that day, when some discreet matron, or genial priest, cometh to see me, I find Moina hath asked to company them; and her father, who knoweth that her resolve is taken, maketh none opposition further.

It hath been borne in upon my mind that I may have a duty of unselfishness in this thing. There is, they say, a legend from an old master—how a dog in a cattle haggart, that could not himself eat hay, would yap and snarl at the hungry cow which craved a mouthful. I fit the cap to mine own noddle, who am playing dog-in-haggart to Feargus Connell's hungry cow!

But I am only human!

I have nothing but Moina's love—no health, no outdoor life, no ease from pain. Feargus Connell hath all but Moina—ay! and choice for her replacement amongst what is best and beautifullest in pattern and country-side. The cry is too strong within me for Moina's love; and while she will accord me the same, I shall slake my soul's thirst at it, as at a spring; bask in it as in my heart's very sun, hear songs of Paradise in her whispers; take it in by all my five wits for the healing of my dolours, for the compensing of my lost ambitions—ay! for my all, and more than all, of the light and the sweetness of life.

I may be selfish: so have I styled myself. But when I taled the case to Murtagh, he harped curiously upon the leech's word: "miracle."

"Miracle, quotha?" said he. "Well, who knows? Every blade of grass is a miracle, duly regarded. And every lark's egg, and every tadpole that casteth tail, and taketh legs, is a miracle. One whom I may not name said three strange things of late; and thou wast roughly hinted of in her saying."

"I?" said I; "I, Martyn? How can I have got into the matter, dear Murtagh?"

"In these words, Martyn," said Murtagh, laying a hand in all of pity and tenderness around my shoulders: "'When an Earl's five brothers shall pass to England in the belly of a cow, and never return; then shall a cripple of many years dance at the wedding of the woman he loves, and be content.' How dost thou read that, good Martyn?"

"How, alas! Murtagh, but in its one plain meaning?

Not until one impossible thing has happened shall the other impossible come to pass! Yes, I (for your instance) shall dance and be content at Moina's wedding when five sons of an Earl travel in a cow's belly, and not before—"

Here—for I am womanish, I suppose, with long pain and weariness of flesh and spirit—I burst into loud laughter, like that of the idiot boy of Clontarf, that hath white hair and weak eyes, and then I fell into a passion of tears.

"Then call me 'Mad Murtagh' as you will!" cried my comforter, mightily striking his knee through his goat-skin kirtle, "but I read the words other ways about! Forgive me, dear Martyn; thou art overmuch tender for such strong-flavoured tales as mine. I go to get thee some small venison of hare or partridge. I pray thee, play the man when I return, for I hate tears—more especially tears of mine own causing!'

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

IN WHICH, WITH MUCH THAT SAVOURETH OF WIZARDY, THERE WILL BE THE MAKING OF NEW ACQUAINTANCE, TOGETHER WITH THE GIVING OF GOOD ADVICE, DRAWN FROM TRUE HISTORY

THE day after my Lord Earl's arrival at his Castle and Manor of Maynooth was of much interest to my young Lord Thomas.

Partly from the young Geraldine himself, partly from my brother, and even in part from Murtagh—albeit indirectly, —I have this account to give of the way in which my Lord Thomas passed the day.

Greatly enmoved by the inequality of his father's manner, as well also as by the new duty (to wit, marriage) which the Earl had set before him, Lord Thomas took advantage of his father keeping his room, and of the ladies having domestic tasks of spinning and other for their pre-occupation, to go a-fowling with his sporting shoulder-gun.

Now, although the young Lord, upon the evening of his noble father's arrival, had lightly turned the thoughts of the people to their supper of roast ox-flesh, and from the prophesying of Murtagh, he had himself taken the last more to heart than seemed to be.

With (and without) purpose, then, his way took him

beside the oak coppice, wherein Murtagh was oftenest known to take his retirement, although I speak not of sleeping, which no man had ever seen him do.

It is within the eerie imaginings of the people that Murtagh can shrink himself into the size of a Leprehaun and hide under a cabbage. Insomuch, in sooth, that a hare's form hath even been pointed out to me as Murtagh's bed!

When Lord Thomas, then within three miles of the Castle, had penetrated two score paces into the coppice, he heard faintly the winding of a horn, or instrument, which was known to him as Murtagh's trumpet-shell.

It seemed to the young Geraldine's trained ear to come from the low, wooded hills about nine miles off beyond the river.

Disappointed of a conversing with Murtagh, of which he had hardly allowed himself to think as his motive for thus coming abroad, Lord Thomas, with half a thought, put his small gold horn to his lips and blew the sporting notes of the FitzGeralds.

Scarcely had they died away when (but this time only from so far as the river-bank beyond the wood) there came a louder moaning of the conch. And ere the young Lord could put up his horn again, a leveret bounded forth from the covert, whereat the young Lord thundered off his gun. But his aim was disturbed by the stepping forward of Mad Murtagh, in his goat-skin garments, who blew a blast of salutation in the notes of the FitzGeralds' foraying rally, and bowed before him.

"Good Murtagh," exclaimed Lord Thomas, "how is this? Not longer ago than a man could count a score in,

and the sound of thy shell told thee half as many miles away. Whilst I could only wind back an answer, thou art within a mile; and now my hand is on thy shoulder! What magic is this, I say? Well for thee that we, on whom the ends of time are fallen, are less prone than our forbears to shake at thought of a warlock or a witch, or I trow thou wouldst ere this have made a passage on the wings of fire to a bourne from which no conch could send a rally back to Kildare!"

"Ah, my Lord and dear friend!" said Murtagh, smiling, "there is naught in all the promises of the priests that winneth me like the hope that we shall one day *know!* Thou hast often shewn the courage which bides the proper hour of knowledge with confidence and content; and so be it now. Hereafter thou shalt understand if, and how, I knew that thou didst await me here; and if, and how, I did outstrip the kestrel to come to thee from the hills. For the present, leave the wonder a wonder still. Thou art here to ask what I meant in the market-place yesterday; but how shall I know if thou wilt heed my warnings? Then, indeed, I spoke as in dreams. Now I would fain talk as man to man—in the words of history and sound calculation."

"I am not so sure, friend Murtagh," said his Lordship, smiling, "that I am not like our people, in being awed and impressed by thy power to move like a sunburst, and by others, thy wonders! Many advise me 'as man to man': do thou still admix thy lessons with mystery, and doubtless they will work better towards their end."

Murtagh sighed.

"Is it indeed so, dear my Lord?" said he. "Well, well, thou hast thy weird to fulfil! What will be shall be! If mystery would make thee give due attention to my words, thou shouldest have it galore! Yet, alas! when will youth love wisdom more than wonders, or belief in Truth be otherwise than for the works' sake?"

"Ah, Murtagh! from my boyhood have I heard of Banshees and Leprehauns; and of them whom to name is to make them our rulers. If I am never to see them, how am I to believe?"

"Seeing is easy, Master FitzGerald. It is the believing, we are told, which makes the truly wise man. And oh, if only thou wouldst harken and accept my teaching, unborn generations—though they spring not from thy loins—would have occasion to rejoice!"

"Well, Murtagh, I shall truly harken unto thee and believe. Thou has come ten miles in ten seconds to me, and that even *sans* a broom-stick!"

Murtagh looked pensively at his pupil. Again sighing, he seemed to change the subject whilst the young Lord reloaded and primed his shoulder-gun.

"Where is the game?" said the weird dreamer. "I heard thy thunder over near for welcome music at this end of my journey to meet thee."

"It escaped me—a leveret. I had had better sport had I had my cross-bow."

"Thou hast heard of Leprehauns, my Lord. Hast thou ever heard that your Leprehaun, when tired of cobbling at shoon for his masters, taketh air on occasion as a leveret?"

"I have heard old wives' fables no whit behind that same for foolishness; but not quite the same."

"Whither did thine escaped quarry speed?"

"To yonder tuft of bracken, methinks; but of a truth, thy sudden coming, and the smoking of the piece, called off my gaze from the leveret."

"Well, let us see in what shape he will answer to our call. Blow thy horn softly."

Lord Thomas, smiling and wondering, wound his tube mellowly. Nothing followed.

"Let me essay the matter then," said Murtagh.

Putting his conch to his lips, he began a low moaning note, which deepened and waxed louder, and clanged or bleated harshly, till it ended in a fearsome roar.

"No hare that ever I shall see will abide within five miles of that clangour, my friend!" said the Geraldine, making a motion as of intent to stop his ears.

"Thou art right, my Lord," said Murtagh; "behold, no hare, indeed, but—"

As he spoke he pointed towards the tuft of bracken, tall and withering, towards which the leveret had run.

The fronds swayed and shook; the stalks divided and bent; and a small figure, hardly more than the length of a man's leg to the knee, appeared and bowed!

It was, i' faith, a perfect human in all respects, bar that it stooped a little or was short-necked. It was clothed in scarlet from head to foot—that is to say, with scarlet hat and feather, scarlet doublet and slashed jacket, trunk hose, and scarlet shoes with pointed toes.

Seating itself upon a tuft of moss it drew forth a shoe,

which for size might, perhaps, have received Murtagh's thumb, and commenced rapidly stitching the same.

Whilst that my Lord gazed as one moonstruck upon this appearance, Murtagh smiled as he regarded him.

"*Murtagh!*" did Lord Thomas gasp; "what is it? Art thou in league with the devil? Is—*is* that indeed the leveret I shot, changed by black art into a Leprehaun?"

Murtagh waved his hand, and the small figure vanished.

"For the time, my Lord," said Murtagh, "be pleased to think well and honestly of me. Of my part, I promise to clear me of all doubt in thy mind before I let thee go hence. See! no Leprehaun is there now to be seized and held till the yielding up of his crock of gold pieces! But if thou wilt seat thee upon this fallen tree, I shall answer the question thou hast not asked; and I beseech thee now, harken to my council!"

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

THE SCRIVENER SUMMETH UP MURTAGH'S HISTORY AND COUNSEL TO LORD THOMAS FITZGERALD

For the next hour Lord Thomas listened to Murtagh's review of the history of the family to which he was heir-apparent, so far as the same bore upon the advice he had to get from him. That advice consisted chiefly in this: to be, in his time, less of the chieftain and more of the administering politician than any of his friends or forbears.

Now let me, Martyn Fallon, run through, in writing, what might be taled to such as Lord Thomas FitzGerald without miscomprehension. He at least was well versed in the particulars, however little inclined to guide himself by the lessons that should be read therefrom.

As with Gerald, ninth Earl of Kildare, so had it been with his father, also named Gerald, the eighth Earl, who was the grandfather of Lord Thomas.

From time to time he, too, had been summoned to London to give account of himself, and always only because of the jealous machinations of enemies.

All the counts brought against him were such and such only as might, with as much justice, have been brought against any other of the Irish peers for a century!

The acts, and the ways of working laws, which are of

approved effect in high civilisations, were not smooth-running machines just then in Ireland.

That captain at sea who shall, in a time of storm and stress, deal in smirking "by your leaves" and courtly "so't please ye" to his sailors, is less admired for his grace than feared for his folly. Hard nuts require heavy cracks, and the followers of wild Irish nobles were not to be laved of their lawlessness by the squirting of lavender water!

And so, for now two generations the heads of the Geraldines, when summoned upon inimical report to palliate threats of attaint for violence to the King's Irish subjects, again and yet again showed cause why their several impeachments should be quashed. For, whereas the rehearsed and alleged deeds of violence plainly affected the interests alone of those who complained (or, it often happed, only their passions), none thereof were of any consequence whatsomever, as touching the interests of the King.

Now this was, moreover, proved, viz., that full often the Kildares, in using the violence alleged against them, had done so at personal detriment to themselves and their friends, but in support of the footing and hold of the Pale (that is to say, of the English community) in the King's five counties. Let this never be forgot.

"And, my Lord," said Murtagh, when arrived at this point, "the falls—so called—of thy grandfather, like those of his present Lordship, were as the falls of Antæus. They only gave the wrestler increment of strength every time he went lowest, as to the wrestler with Heracles, in the classic legend.

"To such truth as your fathers uttered, the English Commissioners had never been accustomed. When the eighth Earl was to be charged with the burning of the Church at Cashel—so far from the devising of deceits, legal in self-defence—he made his case honestly worse than his accusers could think of. He threw himself down, as it were, to gain strength.

"'Spare your proofs!' he cried to the witnesses. 'Spare your proofs, I say! for I own I *did* burn the Church; I e'en thought the Bishop was in it!'

"When he was before King Henry the Seventh, his Commissioners, the King advised that he should provide himself with good counsel. Thereat the Earl eagerly caught the hand of His Majesty.

"'Good counsel, your Majesty!' he cried aloud. 'Ah, Sire! it is already provided for me—the greatest, the ablest in your Majesty's realms! Your Highness's self it is that I take for my counsel, against one and all, these false knaves!'

"How, then, did such plainness of speech serve a Fitz-Gerald? Why, as it hath ever done! One bitter enemy of thy grandsire was the Bishop of Meath. And with these words (having charged I know not what all of violence and harsh doing upon the Earl) he closed a violent oration: 'All Ireland, Sire, cannot govern this gentleman!'

"'That noble gentleman, then,' said the King, 'shall govern all Ireland.' And thereafter that same Earl governed well—ay, and fought well, only once more to be vexatiously opposed by enemies, and once more to have to show himself aright in the King's interest.

"And if courageous himself, how well did not thy grandsire like bravery and trust in another?

"Once he was in high dight of enragement with servants who had left hot horses a-standing in a cold wind. For a bet that was impossible, one said to a certain Master Boyce: 'I will give thee a good Meath stallion now, and thou wilt pluck an hair from the Lord Earl's beard.' Boyce, at the top moment of the Earl's heat, trusted his good heart, and said: 'Sir, may it please your Lordship, I am to have a good Meath stallion from one of your horsemen if I pluck one hair from your beard.' 'I agree to that,' said the Earl; 'but and thou shalt ravish more than the price named, I shall bring my fist in buffet on thine ear, to the tune of thy fine horse—his kick!'"

Lord Thomas laughed at this merry story of Garret More; and Murtagh proceeded:

"Once, by-the-bye, I was myself a witness of a conference between this the great Earl, and one of his enemies, in the Cathedral of St. Patrick, beyond the slope of the south bank, above the River Liffey.

"When some time had passed, and the Earl had made no sign, fears and murmurs began amongst the followers of the Geraldine. The archers, struck with panic for thy grandsire's safety, rushed in; and Sir James of Ormonde—with whom the controversy was—fled to the Chapter-house, bolting the door after him. I was but a fearless boy then, and crowded in with the bow-men.

"The archers shot, every whither, about them; and I well remember how they left many an arrow sticking even in the Sacred Figures.

"Bitterly did the Earl rebuke such violence and sacrilege; and, in speech through the oaken door, he besought Sir James to be assured that he would take no hurt, and to receive his hand upon it. The other, still fearing the archers, would not open the door, and a hole was cut for the doing of this proof of good faith. But Ormonde shrank from putting forth his hand, lest it should be cut off short. Then Kildare passed his hand through. Sir James, at the act, opened the door, and like brothers they embraced in sight of all your grandsire's following.

"And, my Lord, so runneth the history of our country for many a year. It is the history of thy Family, with side-excursions into the same of their enemies.

"This it is which layeth the Earls of Kildare so easily and so often open to impeachment. It is small proof of wit—the charges against a noble placed as thy father hath been, which my Lord Cardinal Wolsey made. A Kildare can no more set aside his concerns personal when he doeth his work of loyalty than he can miss to benefit in his own person and family when, for the public good, he purgeth the air with tar-water and great fires, in a day of plague and pestilence!

"Lastly, sir, the affairs of our land, over which, at any moment, thy destiny may call thee to preside, are inter-woven with the very life-threads of you Geraldines!

"What are your interests as Chieftains, and as a family, are such when ye are Viceroys also. An Earl of Kildare may be trusted to fight for peace, and contend for harmony; for his good governance as a ruler ever beareth upon his prosperity as a dweller upon his own land. The danger is in the construing of it all by his enemies!"

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

(HAVING THE EXPLICATION OF THE SEEMING NECROMANTICS, AND THE END OF THE MATTER OF MURTAGH'S WARNING)

"Two questions I would put to thee, good friend Murtagh," said Lord Thomas, arising to go, when his wise friend had at last come to an end.

"The first, my Lord Thomas?" said Murtagh, with a smile.

"Why didst thou speak in the market-place as a prophet of evil? Why didst thou speak of blood, and again of blood?"

"My Lord Thomas, I spoke in terms of the fable just now, telling of how Antæus got strength from every seeming triumph of his foe. When thrown, he drew force from the breast of his mother—the earth."

"Yes, I remember."

"But at last, Heracles, his powerful enemy, *flung him no more*, only holding him up from the ground, and strangling him in his arms."

"And, to follow out thine analogy?"

"My dear Lord, what thy Family's enemies have perceived that they cannot do by fair impeachment before a proper tribunal, they will otherwise seek to bring about."

"How, how—I prithee, Murtagh, delay not in thy telling!"

"My Lord, they will essay to make of thee thine own Heracles!"

"Again I say, how, Murtagh?"

"They will seek to make thee break away from power under a mighty King. They will tempt thee to believe that office is never power unless it goeth with a titular independence. They will make our Sovereign in England seem to be thine enemy, and the exterminating foe of thy house! Their hope will be that, holding thyself away from the wholesome touch of discipline, humility, and obedience, thou wilt make him such indeed, and strangle thine own good destiny—if any such there be before thee! So to thy second question."

"Murtagh, it is this: Are the wonders that I saw with thee to-day indeed the outcome of thy traffic with Beelzebub?"

"A plain question, dear my Lord Thomas, so let it have a clear answer."

From some part of his goat-skin clothing, Murtagh pulled forth a conical piece of spongy tree-fungus. Swinging his conch around from his shoulder to his hand, he pushed the mass far along the coils of the shell, from the mouth inwards. Then, placing the small end to his lips, he blew a faint, long, low note, which sounded as though it came from many miles away, even while Lord Thomas stood at his side. Half withdrawing the wad, he blew again, and the tone seemed to come from a short distance into the wood. Then, all-withdrawing the pad, he was preparing to

blow the harshly-vibrating tone which he had wound before, when Lord Thomas, stopping his ears, cried:

"Spare me, I prithee! I understand one of thy wonders. May I now ask—"

"Shall I wind the blast which showed you the Leprehaun my Lord?" interrupted Murtagh.

Before Lord Thomas could reply, the less blatant noises of the conch were made; and again the tiny figure in red appeared, became seated, and commenced the labour of St. Crispin.

"Murtagh!" murmured the young Lord, in an awe-stricken tone, "this, verily, is no illusion. I can see for myself that thou hast—"

"Said I not rightly, my Lord, when I named, for the dearest promise of our future, that we shall *know*, even as we are known? The explaining of the Leprehaun, which, like the calls of the conch, I beg thou wilt not tell of—"

Lord Thomas signed his assent.

"—is as facile as the other."

So saying, Murtagh swung his conch back over his shoulder by its rope of green dyed wool, and bent down, stretching his hands towards the small red figure. As he murmured some words in a strange tongue, the weeny being stowed away the shoe which it had been repairing, and shuffled rapidly to Murtagh's arms.

"See, my good Lord, there is no more mystery about my little friend, Jacob Ranstraw, than there was about my conch! Jacob is as human as thyself—although (as he and I sometimes entirely prove, for our mutual good) but a pocket specimen of humanity! He is a little man of

thirty inches, who, caring not to keep worse company, hath come to me, in my oak woods, for shelter and concealment. He knows all the calls of my conch, although unable to formulate words himself. He has many dresses, of which I think he liketh this red one best, and so on rare occasions, like this, I summon him from his little sheltering-place amongst the bracken. Thus, dear my Lord, evanisheth mystery the second! May Heaven forfend that thou shouldst scorn the counsel, because there is an end of the curiosity!"

The tiny dwarf had nestled confidingly against Murtagh's knee, from which watching-place of curiosity and security he gazed with some awe at Lord Thomas, and at that dreadful weapon which had made the thunder.

Barring that the forehead receded too abruptly, and that the shoulders were something of intruders upon the neck, the sole departure from a proportional form, rare, I have read, in these freaks of Nature, was a bowing of the legs which, oddly, corresponded with what is said in foolish tradition of the fairy cobblers, the Leprehauns.

Murtagh had given sanctuary to the little man when the same had fled from some Romany folks, who had made money by the showing of him. Their bad treatment of the dwarf had occurred during a brawl which had a fatal end; and in their own flight from revenge, they could not pursue the dwarf.

About twenty years of age, little Jacob Ranstraw was quite childish in manner—the mind having been as hindward of development as even the niggardly-built body.

But he had a talent for mimicry, and a passion for fine

clothes, both of which Murtagh had turned to account, not only as now, with Lord Thomas, but also (albeit at rare intervals) with the superstitious people of the country-side.

Making Jacob assume the appearance of winged fairy, of gigantic toad, or of the enemy of mankind, by the sides of wishing wells, or near fairy rings, Murtagh had often overheard the trembling confessions of evil-doers or ill-designers, for whom the exordiums of the monks had neither attractions nor terrors.

It was with this aid that Murtagh had been able to show a knowledge of affairs which had often appeared to be magical, and the distorted name for which was "madness."

"But two people besides myself, my Lord, know now the natural explanation of my distant-sounding shell, and of these appearances of my little familiar, Jacob Ranstraw. I once more crave of thee the courtesy of silence in the matter, for a good reason."

"I shall keep your secret, Murtagh! But tell me now, 'man to man,' as your own phrase hath it, and in one word, what may I do towards the setting aside of my evil destiny; or how must I comport myself, favourably to influence the future of my family, or to work out, harmlessly, mine own weird?"

"My Lord, I may only say thus much: see warnings more than ensamples in much of the doings of your forbears and your peers in this distracted lands of late decades.

"Be before thy time in striving towards peace, and the paths thereof. It is to-day more true than ever it was, that they who take to the sword shall by the same perish.

"Therefore, in thy day of power and command, wield the public weapon as the emblem of obedience and authority, not exciting thyself of shallow cause to strike with thine own.

"Six times have thy sires answered the impeachments of their enemies; but the seventh occasion is not arrived and safely dealt with yet.

"The old enemies came not into court, either with hands clean of the charges that th brought or with disinterest for the King's service.

"*It is through thy haste, thine own rashness, that they mean to strike at thee next.* I know this to be true, my dear Lord.

"Have a care against flattering words, and the vanity of fine names.

"Thou hast almost come to the dividing of the ways of thy life. I have sought as I may to help thee. By the trust that I have placed in thee this day, I adjure thee, be cautious; be patient! Remember the words of Mad Murtagh!"

Catching the little dwarf, Jacob, in his arms, and with a proud but sufficient gesture of salute, Murtagh dashed into the bracken, loudly blowing his conch.

In ten seconds more, a faint, low, moaning tone of the same seemed to wander like a summer-night echo from the far distant mountains. Then all was silence and loneliness.

Lord Thomas arose, and stood towards the Castle.

. . . . . .

But he never guessed that I, even Baruk Fallon, the crippled Scrivener, was that other (who knew the secrets of Mad Murtagh) of whom the prophet had spoken.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

BY WHICH APPEARETH HOW THAT, DURING A SICKNESS OF MARTYN FALLON, THE SCRIVENER, THE AFFAIRS OF THE FITZGERALDS WORKED TOWARDS THEIR DESTINY

It is many weeks since I added aught to this poor record.

Upon top of all others, my bodily weaknesses must needs befall my catching of that Sweating Sickness, to threatening of which my Lord had resorted for argument why his son should early marry, that the House of the FitzGeralds might not fail of an heir, by direct succession of eldest sons.

Charles heard my Lord say that there were forty thousand cases of the pestilence in great London only, and that five in every hundred met the death thereby.

It hath been opined that mouldy or sprouting grain, sometimes that which hath black horns too, led on the plague; but for me, this cannot be of the causes.

All suddenly I had a burning ichor or sweating all over the body, vexing the humours of my frame with a flaming hotness. Soon the head whirled and throbbed, and the stomach was racked and upheaved so that I may not farther tell of it. It was not what could be borne.

As I laid in bed, I flung off all bed-covering; and the importunate heat but increased thereupon.

For thirst, there was that of which the waters of a torrent could make no assuagement.

Even at my worst came in Murtagh, with cooling drinks of pestled sorrel and curdled milk-whey. And all in silence he heaped upon me more than all of the bed-clothing, laying arms by side in imprisonment of sheet and drugget. Atop of all he put the heaviest covering; and of thick-fleeced sheep-skins was one.

In mine anguish of a less heat before, I had moaned and cursed. In the steaming and scalding bondage now made by Murtagh, I was silent, or only named God, and Our Lady, and my patron personal, the blessed and happy St. Martyn.

When it seemed that I must soon die, Murtagh put to my lips his sour posset. A great wooden bowl of water from the spring, given me earlier from the hands of my good and frightened Aunt Vimbela, had dried from tongue and lips, like the wetness from a full-boiled egg, and that ere the bowl could be placed empty on the ground. Murtagh's drink satisfied my parching with the filling of a pullet's egg-shell for quantity!

My head, that had banged as a drum beaten from the inside, became cured of all dolours when he laid a mash of pounded nettles, and other simples, cold upon the forehead. Also ceased the double hearing of sounds—as when a dog seemed unto me to bark, first, in his kennel, and then instantly in my poor head!

And albeit the sweating waxed, so that it dripped through

my truss of rushes and straw—yea, I heard the drops of it fall—yet the scalding thereof waned; and, with the sighs of a comfort that I felt a-coming, I grew in patience.

Eftsoons, I slept, blessing God and my friend with my last thoughts.

By the morning, I was quit of my fever, and Murtagh left me to the care of mine aunt, and, in such fashion as might seemly be, of Moina.

I remember it all; but the plague is a matter too well known of and described in the Gazettes and histories of the years 1486-1509, and 1525, of our Salvation, so I pass it.

Yea, though, I had been sore handled by the plague! And I had remaining such weakness as made it that the rushes and new straw upon my trestle seemed anon to open, to sink, to let me down, so that in giddiness, I would shut mine eyes, and cast out my skinny arms to clutch the bed-bars, moaning!

And the days which passed with improvement, were thrice undone with returns of the ailment.

But each new spell was weaker than the last; and so, to-day, I am given my parchments, and my writing-stone,[1] a little paper, too, and my pen.

. . . . . .

The urgency of the scrivenery which had to be complete for regard of correspondence with Sir Adrian Fortescue, upon the affiancing of his fair daughter to the Lord Thomas; and drawing up of settlement from dictation of the lawyers and the family, with fair and spare copies; the helping Charles with his tallies and accompts for the coming

[1] A slate.

banquets; the ordering of many matters for neighbours who could not read; verily all this had made for me so vast a mass of labour, that, methinks, the sickness—of which, by the way, my Lord Chancellor had died some months before—had found me easy to be struck down. For my good recovery I much thank God and my blessed St. Martyn.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

OF THE OCCASIONS TO TRIUMPH GIVEN TO THE ENEMY, THE PROPHECIES OF FRIENDS, AND THE POPE'S GIFT OF AN UNFITTING TITLE TO AN ADULTEROUS KING, WITH PARTICULARS OF LORD THOMAS, HIS BRIDE

THOSE days after the Earl's return were of much excitement in all ways.

It is, of course, well known that whereas, in former times, the Lord Cardinal, Wolsey to wit, had been jealous of the power and authority of the Earls of Kildare, and had impeached them on arraignments for violent bearing, and for the practices of Irish Peers during centuries; that same Prince of the Church had fallen from political power before the last return of my Lord Kildare.

Item: It is known how even Sir William Skeffington (some time Lord Deputy, but having it in command to rule by our Earl's assistance) had opposed the same Lord Kildare; and he, too, was now removed from letting and hindering his Lordship.

As Murtagh saith:

"If only the FitzGeralds would consider, and see, all would now be well. A too fair way is a deceptful way."

But it hath moved the air how that our ladies, Catherine and Mary, are being wooed, with cognizance of their father,

by the wild chieftians, Brian O'Conor Faly and Ferganaim O'Carroll. Nay, even our young Lady Elizabeth, of whose beauty a predecessor of our Lord Kildare in office sang when she was the merest child, calling her poetically, "The Fair Geraldine" in her seventh year,—even she, it is rumoured, might have been wooed by a wild young Irish prince, for all my Lord would have done in hindrance thereof.

(*Nota bene.*—Many years afterwards I am perusing these records of our sad years, and I note that the "Fair Geraldine" is now the wife of the great Lord High Admiral, the new Earl of Lincoln. She had earlier been wedded and widowed by Sir Anthony Browne, a senior knight of the Garter Order. Never hath it reached me that the beginning of that young life in poesy, and the world-wide repute of loveliness, secured to this daughter of a king's cousin more of joy or comfort than hath befallen my Moina of whom high-born poets never sang either metrically or love-sicklily.)

Alas! how will not this give occasion to the enemy! My Lord Kildare so emerged from three trials that he hath now the office, the honours, the dignities, and the responsibilities of a Vicegerent. Wherefore, then, I ask, bating my breath even before this paper, wherefore doth he rage about, in the rough grandeur of an Irish chieftain, and unlawfully consort and ally himself, act and blood, with men unfriendly to His Majesty of England?

Murtagh hath farther told me that about the time of my sickness, the Earl ramped like one distraught, and made enemies on the right hand and on the left!

He hath deposed Archbishop Alen from the Chancellorship, and moved thereto Cromer from Armagh. Now, this same Alen hath been the means of much true knowledge to the English King and Council; but ever forth he will be the industrious and even malicious enemy, in season and out of season, of the FitzGeralds' race.

The pity of it all is that the very stars in the firmament have fought on the side of this present Lord Kildare, whom may God save from his own hand. Amen! None other can!

So far back as the year of grace 1500, he, then a very young man, was made Lord Treasurer. How generous therein was King Henry the Seventh, and in commendation of my Lord's father; and what a start in the life public for my Lord!

But it seemeth that he and his have a very doom and destiny of blindness and disobedience upon them; and I fear it most of all for our gallant and beautiful Lord Thomas, or "Lord Offaly," as I may call him, now he is of an age for that courtesy.

One (who may not be named) hath told me that when his grandfather, eighth of the Earls, lay a-dying at Athy (the same was caused by a grievous gun-wound received from the O'Mores of Leix while he watered his horse in the River Greese at Kilkea), he heard that the Lady de la Zouche, then become Countess of Kildare, was being brought to bed. That happened in 1513, for birth of the Lord Thomas. Then taking some of the blood of his wound on his hand, he said, "Ay, so! as a Geraldine goes out, a Geraldine comes in! But there is pain at both ends

of a Geraldine's life; and this will be a boy, and have a woesome weird to fulfil. He will know more of pain and blood than we all!" And so he died, and was entombed at Christ's Church.

Murtagh is full of stories and legends, many of which I shall preserve herein, but not knowing how he heareth them.

Although Murtagh hath the justness to perceive that our bluff King hath been leniently moved in his condoning and promotion of the Earls of Kildare, and although he grieveth sore that the same have not duly advantaged themselves thereof, yet doth he fairly boil and swell in his scorn to hear of that new-fangled flattery by the Pope, which dubbeth a Monarch of such life as King Henry "The Defender of the Faith"!

Upon this matter even the bird in the air, or the mouse of the wainscot, hath ears and tongue; and, silencing his tirade, I am silent myself. May it be—but my knowledge is imperfect—that a Pope, being a mortal man, hath human gratitude for that King who did hold back for a time the ambitions of Lord Cardinal Wolsey, when the same had his eye set straight for the chair of the blessed St. Peter—who, they do say, never even saw Rome, by-the-bye! Let King Henry do as it chooseth him with the Tiara after Pope Adrian's death and so forth!

By reason of my Lord's latest thought, which is, that he hath not a great while to live, pressure came for urgence of the marriage of my young Lord Offaly; and the ceremony hath been quickly and quietly performed.

I know not what all, in prognostications of lovelessness

and childlessness, have companied this union, and all, so far as I can see, because of those three blazing stars, and the strange bearing of the Earl. Yet Murtagh holdeth that the flaming stars are as natural (in their way) as the waxing and waning of the moon, and have less to do with the destiny of Lord Thomas than his own luxury, and his love of flattery and fighting!

So, who can tell?

But, alas! there are some things that I do well know, both from what I see and from the talk of the countryside!

Robbery by the highway, and unprovoked cattle-snatching, nay, even the robbing of the dead and the wish to injure many by the dropping of pins into witch-wells, all these signs that a wise Government is lacking are dishonouring the day of power of my Lord the Earl. This, too, though my Lord, wherever he goeth, taketh with him those that be of his Chapel, that he may have masses (without fail or delay) when piously moved thereto.

Not, albeit, that horrors are only of this distressed country.

I hear through Moina, who heard it of her yellow-haired sister, Rose Eustace, attending upon the ladies at the Castle, how, whiles my Lord was yet in London this latest time, essay was made by one Richard Rouse to work a revenge, to the putting of poison in the soup in the Bishop of Rochester's kitchen, the man being of the opportunities of a cook. Whereat, upon the 16th of February last, the man was surely purged of his offence; they boiled him to death! I need say no more than this—had the Earl performed this punishment, the King would have ordered a

separate prayer for these poor benighted Irish, and hanged somebody!

From the documents referred to in drawing up Lord Offaly's settlements, I note that the sister of Lady Offaly is Lady Wentworth. Sir Adrian Fortescue, their father, who had married Sir William Stonor's daughter, Anne, was a son of Sir J. Fortescue, by his wife, Alice, who was a daughter of Sir Geoffrey Boleyn.

The Fortescues are a great family of Selden; and their beginning as such was when a squire with his shield protected a king in danger, who praised the "Fortescue," or *strong shield*, which had saved him. Would that the good omen might come to the rescue and salvation of Lord Thomas himself, in the person of his wife, a Fortescue, from his weakness, his haste, and his vanity!

Lady Offaly is, they say, a beautiful woman, and I hope there may be no foundation for the gossip that she loveth a young English spark, whose gallantries have even brought him over to Ireland before now, yet who hath vowed a revenge upon our young Lord that hath taken her to wife.

It is strange to hear of her wonder to see how great a college an Earl of Kildare had founded. Her thought of her young husband's father was altogether as of a rough and violent man, who was of good presence, but not either educated himself, or concerned for the instruction of others in the Humanities. Charles as a resident, and I as an out-scholar, were educated in the Earl's College.

CHAPTER THE TENTH

THIS TELLETH OF THE MANNERS, DRESSES, AND FEASTINGS AT THE MARRIAGE OF LORD THOMAS

THERE were gay doings at the wedding feasts, lasting three days.

The dinner was at eleven o'clock in the forenoon. The banquet began when the fair company was seated in the great arched and oak-groined dining-hall, after singing of a grace, with presentation of Hippogras and wafers to the Earl and Countess, which I saw for myself for the first time as was borne to a retired place behind the arras upon my trestle by order of the Earl. It was his Lordship's wish that I should write a list of all guests, and make notes of all conversations by certain (the more important) of them, as might by opportunity reach me.

When the Hippogras had gone round, the food came in very savoury and lavish. There were brave dishes of pewter for the upper table and the guests, others being served with fair trenchers of white ash and pine.

The first dishes were for the upper table, venison, with furmenty of young corn; and for the other feasters, salt beef and good wheaten cakes. At the service of pork, stewed into a broth, all tables partook. Various subtleties came next, being jellies and sweetmeats. Thereafter were

fowls and vegetables for the high benches, whilst the other tables had salt ling and other fishes, usquebagh, and beer. The wild-fowls, which were cranes, bittern, herons, and sea swallows, ruffs, lap-wings, and yerns, were in great plenty, even piled on dishes, from which each feaster, reaching forth, seized what dainty he chose. Once again there were jellies and sweets; and with pheasants and a peacock for the Earl's table only, the feast ended by service of buttered cakes, honey, spiced cakes, hard cheese, and fruit.

For drinking was a plenty of clarry wine, Metheglin, mead, bracket, and ale, besides the Hippogras—so called from the sleeves of Hippocrates, inasmuch as Ypogras, after mulling of the wine and adding of cinnamon and ginger, is strained through a bag as through a sleeve. But methinks this is far-fetched.

My brother Charles, his tallies show wine at fourteen pence a gallon measure, but other drinks are made in your stillrooms. It is my pride that Moina, with everything else, is well versed in all this providing.

After dinner, which endured until three of the clock, the guests rested or slept; and there were zanies, mummers, and pageants to amuse those that were a-waking, withal.

Supper was at seven, with victuals from dinner made hot, and others served with new bread, butter, mead, and beer. For horse carers, link men, kernes, gallowglasses, and passing travellers, and the retainers without, broken meats, with brown bread, were supplied in trenchers, with milk, usquebagh, and beer for drinking. In good time for these banquets, all the windores had been filled in

with glass sheets, the ancient horn being removed. Many, who had never known any but latticed windores, sighed for air which the glass kept from them. Some, not knowing that the woven pictures, called "carpets," were for walking upon, took much courteous pains to pass round the same, hugging the walls, whereat my Lord was very merry.

The guests were bravely habited, because all knew that the Earl had seen the "Field of the Cloth of Gold"; and because the bridegroom, Lord Thomas, always finely attired, would for his nuptials be gorgeous indeed. Some had the trouse, or leg coverings of late years, with coloured lines on the outside; but most wore the long petticoat, a large doublet laced over a stomacher in front, and a wide-sleeved mantle descending in folds to the feet.

Lord Thomas wore all white, whether of satin, velvet, taffety, or basil leather, except his gold chain armour, and many silken tassels therefrom. He had sandal shoon of white calf-skin, with gold lachets, upon his feet, and crossed tapes of cloth of gold bound his long, loose, linen hose in folds up leg and thigh. A white velvet cape, with braid of gold, hung from his shoulders. The cone helmet, of bleached bullock hide, had a golden Marmoset atop, and beautiful golden wings at the side.

The guests of least distinction wore woollen or hempen cloth frocks, much puckered and be-stitched in front, and even rearward. Their legs were clothed in long black or coloured hose.

But ere I could note more for my Lord, or myself, of the bravery, and the feasting, I had to give an ear to the conversing.

And, for all their character for wildness, by reason of inexperience of Court, methought our young Irish chieftains and gentlemen bore themselves very seemly. The great English visitors made lush and smacking noises as they ate, slobbering at the mouth in eagerness to speak the while—picking their teeth with what forks were for taking portions to the mouth from the platter. I saw one stand upon his seat, to reach some dainty which was afore his neighbour; and, again, one looked morose when he deemed another to have seized a tastier helping. When one stood up, another stole the seat away, and much guffawing when a fall and a short wrangle followed. Also, they drank over-hastily, and jeered at the labour of English speech made by our young nobles. One I saw who ogled the timid maiden beside whom he sat; and rallied her upon not eating a great platter of the stewed pork which he had put before her.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

HOLDETH THE FRESH TALE OF THE ABBOT OF READING AND THE ROYAL FORESTER; BUT, BECAUSE OF THE COLDNESS AND UNLOVE OF LADY THOMAS, MARTYN WOULD NOT CHANGE WITH THE BRIDEGROOM

At last, so coarse became the jests that I rejoiced when the Abbot, who succeeded Father Burgess in the Abbey of St. Mary, in Dublin, called upon my Lord to tell the fresh story of the fat Abbot of Reading and King Henry.

In the telling, the Earl made many wanderings and excursions of narrative; but this is the story neatly:—

Henry, the present Majesty, is, as all know, of bluff exterior; and when clad for hunting, in leather and green jerkin, hath not overmuch of the king about him!

One day, hunting not far from the Monastery at Reading, he got astray from his following, and hied him to the monks for a meal.

The Abbot set good ribs of beef before him, and furmenty; and King Henry, being an-hungered from a long fast, laid on thereto like two good men.

The Abbot looked at him amazed!

"By'r Lady!" he cried, "thou art a very mighty and noble trenchman, good forester! And I would give the

King an hundred good pound an he could make my queazy stomach digest beef like thine!"

"Indeed!" said the King. "What an if thou wert taken at thy word?" and he stretched his hand for a parting.

"Then my word would be my bond!" roared the Abbot, slapping his paunch, but shaking his head at what was impossible.

Next day, much astonied, the worthy father was summoned to London, without cause given, or any possible explication; and the following evening was thrown into the Tower! And many Aves did not lighten his care, for who could know what view of his discharge of office the King, his Council, might have come to take, or upon what witnessing?

The days passed, with bread and water for the breaking of the fast in the morning, five miles of brisk walking by the Tower moat, and up and down the high corridors and dark winding staircases; and only the change (ha! ho!) to water and bread for supper, until a week was passed; and the skin of the good Abbot's body hung loose upon him, like the pleats and folds of wrinkled Behemoth, which men call "Rhinoscere"!

Then the Abbot was bound securely, no word spoken, and he was taken to a noble room, all a-sparkle with beautiful dishes and platters. He was unbound; and, being placed before a noble joint, such as the King had been regaled with at Reading, was bade lay on.

The Abbot proved to be as fair a trencher-man as the lost forester had shown himself.

And, lo! forth stepped His Majesty; and bluffly he called out:

"What ho, Father Abbot! either thou hast slandered that queazy stomach of thine—for which ungrateful heresy the *fine* is four hundred good crowns—or else the King hath cured thee of thy queaziness; and then the *fee* is your promised hundred pound! Choose, therefore, betwixt fine and fee, or else return to thy fare at my good Tower of London, for a further—"

And the Abbot's choice was not long a-making.

. . . . . .

My Lord's story was well received, except where the faces under some shaven pates looked a little sour. The Countess gave a signal to the Lady Offaly, who rose, curtesied to her and the company, and headed the procession, walking a-wearily beside her noble young bridegroom.

Thereat O'Nelan, the Bard, struck his harp; and an epithalmium, which he had composed, was sung by the choristers, to the music of which all paced out.

Unknowing, they passed close to the arras, behind which I lay; and through a small rending therein I saw the bride and bridegroom pass.

At my side I heard Lord Thomas murmur, very tenderly:

"Art very weary of it all, sweetheart mine?"

And the answer came, cruel and cold:

"Sweetheart me no sweethearts, my Lord Offaly! But although I be in very truth, as thou sayest, very weary of it all, I am most weariest of thyself!"

I am sore for my young Lord!

They made a splendid couple, having beauty, riches, rank, and a world to wonder at their good fortune in this union.

But although there was the yearning of a fond hope and passion in Lord Thomas's face, in his bride's all was far-away and weary!

So when at last I was borne (very weary also, but with better excuse) to my trestle inside the glass windore, and found Moina awaiting me with flowers, and my good aunt ready with a wholesome broth, floating with marigold flowers and parsley, my heart bounded, for my humble happiness was great!

I would not have changed estates with the gallant young noble who had all in the world—all, that is, but the love that was all the world to Martyn Fallon, at your service as aforesaid!

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

IN THE WHICH IS SEEN HOW THE EARL OF KILDARE FIRST CREATED ENEMIES WITHOUT OCCASION; AND THEN, BEING MADE MAD BY THE GODS, PUT RODS IN THEIR HAND TO SCOURGE HIM WITHAL! HOW THE SAME INDITE LETTERS UNTO HIM WHICH GIVE HIM JOY IN THE EVIL-DOING OF OBSTINACY, AND ARE AS PIT-FALLS TO HIM

THERE was much hustling and clamour at the Manor and Castle after the feasting told of in my last writing, as the guests took their departure.

Of the families of England, those related by blood or alliances to the Geraldines were, amongst others, Stonors, Neviles, Montacutes, Fortescues, Ingoldsthorps, Greys, De la Zouches, and so forth. These had to make display with retainers and followers, and the moving the same to Dublin or Drogheda was no light labour.

Our Irish friends, who had come without parade, disappeared like Arabs, making no to-do.

At last the family was alone, and, with a general longing amongst them for peace and rest, went apart with very few servants; and mostly, indeed, waited upon one another.

Just then much was done to adorn the living rooms. There was much new tapestry for the guest hall. The hangings for the Chamber of the Chapel were of French

red and green. Trussing beds came, of russet cloth of gold, and satin of Bridges. Counterpanes and coverlets were of points and imagery. Bed sidings were of arras-work tapestry. Many short Turkey carpets also came. In the laying and disposal of all which, our ladies took a great part, and much pleasure.

Even then, had the destiny of the FitzGeralds been a happy one, the Earl might have done much towards what was to be desired by staying in retirement, and counselling attention to farming, building, and other improvements of land—matters wherein he had great skill, and was of a liberal heart.

But some inkling that Lord Thomas was unhappy, coming from the great readiness of his young bride to go back for a time to her people, so soured him that, for all his love of his son, he spoke unguardedly once. It was upon what even a father might not wisely intermeddle with, and Lord Thomas was too like the Earl to endure it.

So a short answer did not mend matters; and the young Lord, whiles that he was all that could be of loving and helpful to his deaf sister, and the other remaining one, was haughty and silent to the Earl.

The Yule-tide of 1532 passed sadly, and the New Year opened not much otherwise.

In things of his office my Lord was unequal, and not easily approached.

When he went up to council, and a member or office-holder asked his will, it was his ungracious way to sneer, and slight the officer.

"Am *I*, then, the Lord Treasurer?" he would say,

"or art thou? When Lord Treasurer I was, then did I do and undertake for my stipend! Shall I undertake and do for thee, except as regards that same question of thy taking the emolument?"

But, mayhap, next day an office-holder would come with a tale of undertakings carried (on hint of the last case) to a full end, whereat the contrary reproach would be:

"Hey, hey! This done? that concluded, that other lavished upon? Is there, then, no Lord Deputy to be asked for orders? Perhaps thou hast had commandment from His Majesty to displace this poor Earl of Kildare in that office? Am I to salute you as Deputy, good Mr. Secretary?"

Alas! in cases of old tribal feuds, I knew of approaches made for harmony, whether in letters or personal appearings, most courteously. But Kildare would none of them; and they who came for friendship went away, as I must needs confess, well-nigh justified in their enmity. Even his own brother, Sir James FitzGerald, wrote against him to the King, saying:

"My Lord,—My brother beareth me most extreme displeasure for such services as I did Sir William Skeffington, then your Deputy."

At last, having put all things awry, he, early in this current year of Grace, summoned a Parliament.

"Please you, good Lords and Gentlemen," he cried out one day, "be advertised that I hold ye all disgraced in the condition of this our country!

"He that goeth on his lawful occasions is let and hindered, the violent hand is in no wise restrained, and the useful traffic of letters is in worse case than I ever remember.

"Foulness is in back streets of our towns and villages, and the land too broadly lieth idle, because a man may not hope to gain for himself the benefit of his labour."

To this reproach, and other, the Parliament was sullen; and after a few days with not much done, the Deputy declared the session at an end.

All this futility mightily pleased the Ossory family of Butlers, who for generations had been the rivals and enemies of the Geraldines, which, reaching my Lord's ears, still further soured and enraged him.

Just now it came to him that some ne'er-do-wells, being incited by the devil, meant to fall upon him for rapine or body harm whiles he journeyed betwixt his fine mansion called Carbery House, near to Dublin, and Maynooth. He, wanting to find the truth, deputed James Grant, a follower humbly in his service, and who was like him in countenance, to amble along, with six of the servants, in the Earl's saddle-dress, and covered by the red cape which he himself was customed to travel in.

The varlets fell upon this party at Lucan, until Grant gibed them, crying out that his noble master had gone the other side (or northwards) of the river, and they were fools for their pains! Fearing a larger following, they fled, but were sore rewarded for their outlawry when taken by Lord Kildare's men.

Just then the Chieftain, Ferganaim O'Conor, flattering

my Lord, and proclaiming great injustice done him by his cousin, Ely O'Carroll, set him on to invade the country of the same. There was hasty preparation for the attack, and the Earl's forces sat down before the Castle of Birr.

We shall never know truly the account of that matter, but we, who had often seen the Earl go forth on forays and raids, had never known him set out so gloomily. And as though this heaviness was of a kind prophetic, back came he upon a trestle, sore wounded by a gun-ball from the highest escarpment of Birr Castle! He was gashed in the loin and down the thigh, and arrived in sore straits of pain and anger.

The kernes do tell that when the Earl tumbled, thus hurt, an old soldier rallied him upon his bearing of his maim.

"What ho! my Lord Kildare moaning?" said he. "Please you be advertised that I have thrice been wounded by ball of gun or cannon, yet here am I, sound as any trout, to fight again, and to cheer thee in telling of it!"

Whereupon the Earl, not choosing such familiar accost by a follower, cried out through clenched teeth:

"Sirrah! what cares the Earl of thy county for thy hurts; except he would to God that thou hadst had this fourth wound instead of him?"

Wherefrom it will be easily supposed that my Lord's home-coming, wounded and savage, meant much of terror to the Lady Margaret, his deaf daughter, and to that youngest and most beautiful one, Lady Elizabeth, whom men named the "Fair Geraldine," after the aforementioned panegyrics upon her by the Earl of Surrey.

There is, amongst those who live sumptuously and swill strong wines, an ailment of great dolour, which generally fastens upon the great toe, and with the full exigence of which a man hath such foul passions as maketh his very fingers to be at variance with his thumbs.

Now, so late returned from the banqueting in London to the rich feasts and wine-bibbings at his own Manor, the Earl had started off to hardships, and hurries, and the irregular feedings of a foray. Together with such change came the dolorous wound; and it is even said that, with the Podagree settling therein, his Lordship will never be the same self again. For this moment, at least, all is hurry and uncomfort at the Castle; and all is uncertainty in the Council, with mounted messengers and swift foot-runners to Dublin, bearing papers, whereof one sayeth "Ay!" and the following "Nay!" in the same concerns!

By some devil's jugglery, the enemies of the Earl's rule, and house, and person, have learned of his sourness and his possessed mood, and now avail themselves thereof to make him put rods for his own back in their hands.

With humbleness they indite letters to him, and they preserve copies to be exhibited afterwards to the Council in London. Therein they say how it would be wise of His Excellency the Lord Deputy to do certain things and leave others undone. They counsel him to forego "his right of office, which is, undoubtedly, to scorn good advice," and, "despite his present sad mental and bodily incapacity, to do not of his own will, but otherwise."

Now, the said foes do have a great care that all their counsel is what would read best in England, well knowing

that in the recklessness of pride and Podagree, place and power, wounds, hatred and jealousy, the Earl would not seek to execute what was best for the land, or even for his own interest, but only what was opposite to what he might be advised.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH

THE FATAL FEARS OF CHARLES; AND THE AMENDING OF THE EARL BY THE RULE OF CONTRARY

ALAS! for my poor brother Charles! For he hath become mixed up with this turmoil by the foolishness of undue fears!

The good Father Burgess, who was Abbot of St. Mary's, in Dublin, and who died Midsummer, 1531, was the loving friend, in sincerity and truth, of my Lord Earl, albeit uncourtly in his approach.

From the distance of his Abbey, he had had superintendence of religion in the Castle Chapel of Maynooth; and one Sunday, my Lord being nearly recovered as to the closing of his wound, the good Abbot who succeeded him took a sermon which Father Burgess had prepared, and had it altered and fair scrivenered to be read before the general household.

It first made thanks for my Lord's improvement, in terms of the present Abbot's invention, and then, on words aken from the Book of Kings, made the lesson for edification. It told the story of how Rehoboam took not the counsel of the old men (to make lighter the troublings of his father), but accepted the counsels of the young men,

who made him say he would whip the people with scorpions!

But the Abbot, suddenly falling sick of a fever, sent down the written discourse for reading by a priest of the household. The sermon only arrived at nightfall on the Saturday.

Now, by evil mischance, the aged priest at Maynooth (who was my Lord's Father Confessor, and from whom faithful words were well borne) had gone a journey, and my brother Charles must needs read the sermon!

This history of the foolishness of Rehoboam, whereby he made Israel to rebel against the House of David for ever, cannot be read without one seeing how the lesson could be made to lean hard upon the crass bearing, in his office, of my Lord to everybody.

My cleric brother, privily studying the discourse before the household Mass, had concern to be loaded with the reading of the same aloud; but comforted himself because he knew the Pothecary was resolved to advise that his Lordship did not leave his bed upon that day.

Therefore when, half through the discourse, Charles, from the pulpit, saw my Lord enter, he was confused for dread of offence, and, in very fear that the Lord Deputy would feel the sting of the young lips pronouncing such an edification, lost his place. Essaying to find it, and giving the sense of it thus so far: "So Jeroboam and the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the King bade them," he trembled at what was coming, making it far worse in this way:

"And lo! the King answered the people roughly, say-

ing: 'My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastened you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions!' So, the *Earl* harkened not unto the people!"

Who shall tell of the Lord Deputy's wrath! But it was no greater than the terror and faintness of my poor brother, who, as it were, heard his own voice too late to stop the words!

My Lord stood up, and limped away, vowing to call the Abbot sternly to account.

Charles, when service was ended, hastened to my Lord's chamber, and on his knees sought pardon, showing the writing in the discourse, and protesting that it was by his awe of seeing his Lordship from bed that the mischance had happed!

Whereupon the contrariety of the Earl's ailment served my brother, for Lord Kildare roared:

"Priest! by what right sayest thou that there is error therein? Hath God, then, no witnesses this day because Abbot Burgess is no more? Where is thy courage that thou dost not think how, peradventure, the finger of the Lord may have been as a coal of fire upon thy baby tongue, to put 'Earl' for 'King,' and to stab home, as from the lips of a suckling, a keener-thrusting lesson even than the great Abbot had intended? Now, therefore, go to; and I charge thee that, first writing 'Earl of Kildare' for every place of Rehoboam's name, and 'his enemies' for every mention of Jeroboam and the people, thou shalt leave the Abbot's discourse for my study! And for thine own meditation, and for words of an early discourse, take this

text: 'As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak!'"

So that my brother Charles came trembling forth, and knew not whether to think well or ill of what had occurred!

But Moina, whom both he and my dear aunt with the sweet voice love next after myself and her father, comforted the timid Charles, saying it was even as the Earl had said: the point and the message were laid upon his tongue for deliverance to my Lord. Nay, of her acquaintance with the internal life at the Castle, she was later able to tell us both as follows: to wit, that taking to heart the lesson of Rehoboam and the sermon, the Earl, besides being eased of his dolours by some possets of the Barber-pothecary (which before he had scorned to swallow), had now entered upon mild courses, and was decided to act upon the counsel that was so quaintly delivered to him, and the like as touching all other counsel whatsoever that seemed to be good, whether the same came to him by lip of friend or foe.

And now cometh what is saddest of it all.

His enemies, perceiving this better intention and wiser mood, as coming to defeat their end of the Earl's destruction, have hastened to send an inimical Deputation to England, putting vast blame upon the Earl of Kildare lest there should be time for good to come of the change.

I shall finish this writing by setting out the heads of the attack, viz.:—

1. That decay had fallen upon the land, wherein the English language, dress, and laws were not used, except within a compass of twenty miles.

2. The disuse of fire-arms, no archery, no stout servants,

but only native servants, who could live hardily without bread and other good victuals.

3. The Lords of the Pale, under the countenance of the Earl of Kildare, retained no soldiers at their own expense for the defence of the Pale, but only as heavy burthens upon the poor subjects of the King.

4. Liberties, kept by the great Lords, defrauded the King.

5. Black Rent was paid by those able to afford it, so encouraging violence against the poor only. When property stolen was recovered by an English force, the Lords, instead of returning the same to the owners, kept it themselves. For prevention of this a Butler was no better than a Fitz-Gerald, the mistake being—so the Deputation said—the appointment of any Irishman to the post of Lord Deputy of Ireland.

6. Negligence of the King's records.

7. All Manors, Lordships thereof, and properties were gone, so that there were no means wherewith to carry on the Government.

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This statement was signed by the Bishops of Armagh, Dublin, Meath, and Kildare. The successor of Abbot John Burgess of St. Mary's Abbey signed it, he opining that he must have made an enemy of the Lord Deputy by sending the sermon above mentioned, and little knowing, by crass rules, he, the Abbot, had been more the occasion of betterment on the part of the Earl in life and bearing than any other man.

For pity of it, just when this hard deputation took up

its parable against the Lord Deputy, "the effect of his wound was more and more hindering the enjoyment of his limbs; and his words, formerly flowing like a limpid mountain runnel, were now delivered in mightily poor plight!" So says one who knew.

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Let me here briefly record such progress in my own body state that it would seem the evil plague which I had endured, had purged, sweetened, and strained the humours of my blood and brain.

Alas! the frailty of the injured back doth only seem the harder to bear as it becometh my only ailment and disabling! Wherein I read, with shame of face, of the evil ingratitude of human hearts, and ('fore them all in general), of mine own in especial!

I am now possessed, for entry here, of the final conclusion of the report of the adverse Deputation to England; and therewith I shall conclude this thirteenth chapter of my writing. It was further signed by Lord Gormanstown, Lord Trimleston, and others, after that it had said this—

"Finally, Gentlemen of His Majesty's Council, your Petitioners do say that with dissention so rooted betwixt the Earls of Ossory and Kildare, they cannot come into conformity, or work for the boon or good of the country, if either be Deputy, or either aspire to that room."

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And so, for the time, an end!

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH

WHICH COMETH MORE CLOSELY TO THE TOUCH WITH LORD THOMAS FITZGERALD AND HIS WEIRD; AND WHICH SHOWETH FRESH REASON THAT WHAT A PROPHET'S MESSAGE IS, THAT SHOULD HE DELIVER, WILL HE, NILL HE. WOLSEY'S ATTEMPT TO SLAY THE EARL OF KILDARE

WHILES that my Lord Thomas sat down with others his family to await, with what hope they could, the issue of affairs, methinks his perception of the new mildness in his father's action and bearing (which formerly had been like that of one distraught), together with the plain change in his body's health and spirit's cheer, did soften with forgiveness the heart of the son to the sire.

Besides, albeit the rough words of the Earl which angered Lord Thomas may never be known in this world by themselves, yet if it be rightly opined that they bore upon the question of a possible gap in the direct family succession, there came a certain justification of the matter of the Earl's lamenting (although it may be hard to find excuse for the manner thereof, even from an anxious parent) to his unfruitful son.

For, as the months passed, there seemed neither a prospect of an heir nor sign of wholesome concern upon the

beautiful but most callous bride, as concerning her fruitlessness.

More and more, then, the time of the son was passed with the ailing and erring father. And, although I came to the knowledge that Lord Offaly pined with an aching soul for the love of his young wife, even seeking philtres and potions to make her love him withal, yet this pride of his race for manly beauty would not force himself upon her company, she being all unwilling.

The better for the Earl, at all events!

For, in the soreness and sadness of his heart, Lord Thomas looked both abroad in the land, and at home in his father's company, for distractions, interests, and occupations.

There were times when his dream had happened to be a union with the other greatest family in Ireland, to wit, the Butlers of Ossory. They were of an equal nobleness with the Geraldines, in some degree their kinsfolk, and plainly their rivals in the love and fear of their great followings. The Butlers were generous to a degree of wrong-doing; capable in their rude chiselling of affairs; and, even in the counter assault, or the thievery of mere retort, guided by the same honour as the Geraldines.

In dreams of days nearer to his boyhood, the heir of the Geraldines (however much nurtured in the blood-feud official against the Butlers) had, at least, a thought for the beauty of their maidens.

But although one of the fairest of them was said—too often for her family's pleasure—to look kindly upon our young lord, whenever, at long gaps of time, the chance

came, and although Murtagh has often said how good it would be for the distressed land if such a thing had happened, the drift of fate was against it.

And now he had espoused an unloving English lady; and much of the lightness went from Lord Thomas's step, and of the gaiety from his expression.

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At last, rumours began to reach Dublin, and soon Kildare also, that the deputation had succeeded beyond its greatest hopes.

The terrible doings of the King in England, as regards his wives and his servants, had aroused a bitter feeling against him—both in his own country and without it—in the hearts not only of the religious, and the clergy, but of the honest-disposed laity. And at last the evil of matters had got so far as Rome; and His Holiness, Pope Clement the Seventh, set about excommunicating the King.

The result we do know.

The King became a new man; and awoke with a stern keenness to the consciousness that it behoved him to fight for his own hand as regards the things of both worlds.

The latest charges against the Earl of Kildare had been framed, not only with cunning, but (by the experience of the former failures) so as to make them bite; and this time they held on. The Earl was, for the fourth time, summoned to London.

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Now, herein was a wonderful thing.

It was not until my Lord's partial recovery, and the effect of the sermon about the unwisdom of Rehoboam,

that he had begun to amend such very ways of governorship as were complained of successfully by the Deputation. And, certes, I shall never forget the smile that rippled over the face of the Earl as he asked:

"Did his Reverence of St. Mary's Abbey sign that instrument?"

For, as I have set forth in this writing, the accident of my brother Charles making an error when preaching the late Abbot's discourse had had effect, more than the jealousy of Wolsey, the hasty bluff sarcasm of the King, or the irritations of all his foes, in leaning the Earl to depart from the ways complained of. So there was a sad irony of fate in Abbot Francis signing the indictment—he who had well-nigh changed the Lord Deputy from the evil of his ways by the sermon which he had sent, and an accident.

About the day when it became known that the Earl had received injunction to repair to England this last time, Murtagh happed in upon me. I was reading aloud from old parchments and records to Moina and my good aunt; and Murtagh was himself like a muniment house, holding much ancient lore. One never came to a matter to which he could not add items; but in all concerning the FitzGeralds, the completeness of his chronicleship was wondrous.

Moina moved him to tell her how the crest for the Earls of Kildare came to be a monkey, or ape, or marmoset, as I shall one day give the same from the lips of Murtagh, so that it may never be confounded with a like story in the history of the Desmond FitzGeralds, and told of their dwelling at Callan in the County of Limerick. My good

Aunt Vimbela also never wearied of hearing the legends of the family of the Geraldines.

For one thing, he told of Cardinal Wolsey, his attempt to murder the Earl by sentence of death upon him without the King's order at the former visit. The Earl was at play at shuffle-board with the Lieutenant of the Tower, who was his fond friend. A letter was placed in the officer's hand; and, observing that he changed countenance, he asked him might he know what agitated him? The Lieutenant tried to baffle the Earl; but this only made him suspect that the paper seriously concerned himself; and at last Mr. Lieutenant told the Earl that the letter was an order for his execution in the morning. The Earl knew at once that the King would not give the order in any such way, and implored the officer to proceed at once to the royal presence, as the Lieutenant had access to His Majesty at any hour of day or night. He arose from their game of shuffle-board with a profound sigh.

"Now, I pray thee, do no more," said the Earl, "than learn assuredly from the King, his own mouth, whether His Highness is willing thereto or not."

The Lieutenant, like many who came in touch with the Earl, loved him dearly; and although fearful to vex the Cardinal, went to the King. His Majesty highly commended him, was much moved at so great and unauthorised danger to the Earl; and gave his signet ring wherewith to countermand the sauciness of the priest.

The holy Cardinal swore like an ordinary sinner at being baffled of his vengeance, which was for the Earl's great answer to the very first charge in the last impeachment. It

was so clear and simple in statement of fact and law, so graceful and flowing of utterance, and so musical in sound, that all the Cardinal could do was fling up the charge, and speed from the chamber.

And the Lord Cardinal never forgave any who worsted him on his own dung-heap.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH

MURTAGH HATH FEARS BECAUSE HE THINKS LORD THOMAS WILL BE MADE DEPUTY IN THE ROOM OF HIS FATHER

But I, who knew all the manners of Murtagh, perceived that upon this particular day there was something more in his mind than old history. When, for a moment, the women went to prepare a meal, I laid a hand upon his arm and said:

"Murtagh, what is it? Thou hast heard something: may I know what it is?"

"Ah, dear Martyn!" said Murtagh, heaving a great sigh, "I should have told thee in any event; but the surmise which now saddens me is something that all the Earl's friends should hear of.

"Through all the Autumn I have known that Skeffington hath been raising his head in confidence of the Earl's sure destruction. Deythick, the priest, writing like a zany, and buffooning in his reports, or anyone most unconcerned in affairs, is listened to when charging the Deputy with removal of arms, or any fault. In September, as thou knowest, my Lady, the Countess, set out for England to use her kinship and interest, that my Lord should not, this fourth time, be arraigned; but the order therefor was not recalled. Ossory wrote to Cromwell that not all the

parchment and wax in England would draw Kildare thither again; and the very hint of such unwillingness or unreadiness had most effect in making compulsion be put upon the matter.

"But further, as we know, the Earl showed delay about answering the summons, even when it came; and Skeffington did all the more audaciously move against him, saying by which and which ways only the Deputy should pass through the country! It is well on in November, and now hath the Earl received afresh the King's letter."

"But, dear Murtagh," quoth I, "why so gloomy about all this? Hath not my Lord gone before to England? And his returnings—have they not been the confusion of his enemies?"

"True, Martyn; but this time the order is, that he shall name some person (whose acts shall be the Earl's responsibility) for the governance of the country during his absence."

"And even for that," cried I foolishly; "are not my Lord, his brothers, well fitted for—"

"Alas, Martyn!" cried Murtagh, "if it ever came to be that question of who was to be selected, we could send a good answer. But the destiny of our young Lord is closing around him, for the Earl will name him, and he is all unfit. I have foreseen it all. It is his weird. It will be gone through with, and it will end in what I said—in blood and death!"

And then I understood!

For Lord Thomas FitzGerald, with all of goodness of heart, is fiery and busy of temper, hasty to act on impulse,

jealous of dictation, and now soured in his tenderest nature by the melancholy of his union with an unloving and unfertile wife.

When my aunt and Moina, always bent upon cheerful and loving service, set kid's flesh and barley cakes before us, Murtagh, ever unselfish, shook off his gloom. He told of how an ape saved the heir when Woodstock Castle, near Athy, was aflame. Ah! how did not we all thrill and clasp hands as he told it, so that we seemed to behold every licking blaze, and to hear the roaring of the fire along the halls and corridors! What was not our despair when searchers rushed to the nursing chamber of the child,—that John FitzThomas of the FitzGeralds, who was afterwards a famous member of the Family. But the room had been quite gutted by the flames, and horror was in every soul. But a voice was heard on the battlements of the castle. It was a scream, or a cry, or what you please. And when men's eyes were turned thitherwards, lo! a strange sight! The great ape, which was the pet of the Family, had broken his chain, and sped unnoticed to the nursing chamber of the infant. Him seizing all tenderly, so that men say the babe still softly slept, the monkey climbed by ways where no man could have passed, making no call or cry, whilst his having possession of the babe might have terrors for those who love it. But in the free air of the roof, the animal gave its call of joy and triumph! What marvel, then, that the same child, when grown up to be the 6th Baron of Offaly, took for the crest of the family, the Leinster FitzGeralds of after time, an ape with his broken chain! For a while,

also, the motto was used which, being interpreted, is :— "Not forgetful of benefits."

And Murtagh had other stories and legends, merry and delightful, of the great Family.

I, too, produced ancient deeds in the quaint writing and spelling of former days ; and we were very happy.

But at this present—it is the end of February, in the year of Grace, 1534, and when delay could no more avail, or even be possible—my Lord hath finished his preparations, and is departed from Drogheda.

He had never swerved from his resolve to leave Lord Thomas to act as Deputy for him. Before his going, he held a council, and such reason as he had for his act was said forth in words which one who was present thus recorded for us all :—

"My Sonne Thomas,—As I have no doubte of your well-knowing, our Sovereign Lord, the King, hath sente for me into England, the ways whether I know so well already!

"I know not what shall there betide, but God knoweth! Let befall whatever befall may, thou knowest, and I know, how I am well steeped in years. Inasmuch as I am mortal, I *may* die ; but inasmuch as I am old, I *must*, and the same right speedily! It is because I see the budding of thy years in this winter of mine own, dear my sonne, that I will you to bear yourself wisely in these your green days, so that you may well enjoy the pleasures of Summer with the gladness of your friends, and reap the fruits of your harvest ; and lastly, grow such sound wood of your life as

to be well able to bear the Winter, when it shall come to you, as it plainly hath to me.

"And whereas His Majesty hath laid his injunction on me, that on my going I shall name in my poor room a man for whose acts I can answer, I hereby appoint thee to act as Deputy, my sonne, Lord Thomas FitzGerald, in courtesy Lord Offaly.

"None knoweth better than I, your father, that your years are in their tenderness—your plans are not hard formed, your judgment not corrected by experiences. It might be thought I might be easily dissuaded from putting a sharp weapon unsheathed in the fingers of a man so young.

"But forasmuch as I am your father, and you my sonne, I confidently decide to take watches about with you, and through you for the steering of the ship, of which I remain Captain, with thee for first Mate. Thus, what interference may not be with the Deputy, may be helpfully applied in my commands as your father, and correctly may be laid on you as my son, if there be any information of ill work at the helm.

"There be, that sit at this Council with us here, who are more imposing men for a charge so mighty than thou art. But what would they have, I prithee? Were I to pass this load to any one of them his shoulders, he would give one eye to be guaranteed that both of mine would be burned out—because of envy. The case is different with thee—mine own sonne! Thy flesh being my flesh, what toucheth my peace and ease is a trouble to thy skin—nay, more than to my own; forasmuch as I have the tough hide of age,

with quick solace in death; and thou art of velvet, or satin, with long years wherein to endure. Whiles I am making my soul to live a few months in the admonition of God, thou wilt not, as others might, be eager to scratch my skin, by the thrusting of a poignard through thine own hand laid thereupon.

"Now, dear sonne, meditate how it is easy to hack down a tree, and hard to grow one in place thereof! The wisdom of this Council, and the love of its members for our house, do assure me that they will school thee with sagacity. And although by office and authority thou rulest them, in council they must govern thee!

"My sonne, thou knowest that the maims late received in my frail body choke the power of my talking; but now I will croak no more of this matter—who would have repeated my solemn words if need were for their deeper impression.

"But whiles I yearn to help thee further, because I am thy loving father, pitying thy tenderness in the great load I put upon thy young head, yet knowing thine eager inclination to do well from thine own impulse, I cut short my discourse.

"Assured, then, of thine utter good-will, here, before all this most honoured and beloved company, I deliver thee this sword!"

The Earl then embraced the Council, commended them to God, and took his last farewell of his son with sorrow and tenderness.

Thereafter they never met again in this world.

On his departure, Lord Thomas returned to Dublin, and assumed the high office to which he had been deputed.

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By the deed of his father in placing him in the room of the Deputy of Ireland, Lord Thomas became as an handful of tickling cow-itch in the fleshes of two peoples.

His own following and friends celebrated this so young Governor's assumption of the dignity by huge magnificence of dress, and by a manner towards him which fostered his vanity, and prepared the road to those acts by which he rushed on to his doom.

But the opposite class was the cabal of the enemies; and they showed a cunning, a speed, and a skill in deceiving which, in sooth, were worthy of a worthier cause!

Thus was the poor candle burnt at both ends.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH

IT SHOWETH FORTH SOME MACHINATIONS OF THE EARL'S ENEMIES FOR THE RUIN OF HIS SON

HAVING undermined the Earl—now a close prisoner in the Tower of London, they who were enemies of the Fitz-Geralds lost no more time in working upon the vanity, the rashness, the youth, and the inexperience of the son, than allowed him to return to Dublin.

Knowing his impetuosity of the temper, they put small slights upon him—of a kind not worth reporting, but certain and sure to irritate the young Deputy. Nay, even before they left Drogheda, on an occasion of Lord Thomas keeping the Council waiting two hours, he entered the Council Chamber just in time to hear Archbishop Alen ask "if it were not a pretty matter that they should stay so long for a boy?" The Deputy bowed and smiled, and said he was sorry they had elected to stay so long for "the boy!" But they very well knew how he meant: "Ye dared not but await me!"

Again, a great feast being holden in Dublin, the Master of the Rolls got the conversation upon heraldry.

"And, by the way, sir," quoth he, "I think your noble family hath for crest the effigy of a marmoset, ever making ready to feed upon its tail?"

"Thou art right, honourable sir," said Lord Thomas. "We, the Geraldines, have been fed by our tail for so long that our tail must long go an-hungered ere we shall let it feed upon us."

Thus went it on, with haughty insolence as to inferiors on the Deputy's part, and with irritations ceaseless of a petty, unworthy kind on the side of his ill-wishers, personal and national!

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How fared it, meanwhile, with the Earl?

No sooner had he gone than the same enemies sate them down to construe all awry the speech to his son at Drogheda. If ever the Earl had spoken in true sincerity, it was in that speech! For a weighty presage of evil was upon him whiles he spoke; and his recent change towards moderation and desires for good was at its zenith.

When it was charged upon him that he did remove out of the Castle of Dublin all the King's arms, artillery, and munitions of war, to furnish his own castles therewith, he replied that, whatever he had done, it was within the entitlement of a Deputy to do; and that he sought, single-eyed, to do what was best only for the confidence, consolation, and comfort of His Majesty's loyal garrison in Ireland. Why should he be thought to have acted in his office against the King's power, seeing that he had come, naked, to place himself in their hands?

But, alas! two things, or even three, warred against the Earl's success in refutation of charges this time.

1. The charges, as hath been said, had not been of general violence, or of dealings against distant and uncon-

siderable natives in far-removed districts, but of contempt of the King and his authority.

2. The King was so busied enforcing the confession of one woman's legal wifehood and the illegitimacy of another's offspring (both contrary to previous Acts and compulsions) upon all his subjects, that he saw reproof and recalcitration (in homelier words, a "kicking-back," but Charles taught it me) upon that tender point, in any opposition whatsomever—pious, political, or personal!

3. And besides, the novelty of the Earl's glibness of speech had worn off, even had the same been forthcoming; whereas the good faith, well-meaning, and anxiety of the Earl wrought hardly upon the much-impediment of speech which had followed his maims received at Birr Castle.

The change from fluency being in haste assumed to imply guilt, he was straight committed to the Tower.

Then the Earl knew that the King had resolved to remove himself personal from all government; and his one hope for this earthly world came to be that his son would, without prejudicion, be allowed to show his gumption in authority, so that the dignity of the Kildares should not be quite rolled in the dust before their enemies!

For a time he had hope of this, on the poor foundation that the house was not attainted, and that Lord Thomas was not overtly superseded. But even this poor flower of hope quickly failed and faded; and the shadow of Lord Thomas's weird soon chilled—soon paled and parched, his poor father, so aged and so outworn!

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH

SHOWING HOW THE GUILTY CONSCIENCE THINKS EVERY APPARITION AN ACCUSER

MINE own health hath by now so bettered, with wondrous lessening of the dolours of the back, that Murtagh made a movable false top to my trestle-bed. This raising by the hands of himself and a chair-man, he can bear me whither I would. And when the smell of spring moved on mild airs, I was, upon one gladsome day, borne forth and placed at great peace in a thick part of the Cill Dara, or "Church of the Oak," from which Kildare takes its name.

Murtagh sent away the chair-man, and bided beside me a little time himself. Next, some sheep having strayed from a fold hard by, Murtagh went aside to drive them back and pen them, and methinks the air of that strong season had made me heavy at the eyes.

The free, fresh young leaves had early attained unto fulness; and the place was shaded with a luminous greenness and quiet exceedingly. My trestle had been laid down upon a russet heap of last year's bracken, so that I might note the uncurling of the new fronds which were starting up all about me.

Had I slept? I know not.

But suddenly I heard voices, pitched to low tones only, from just beyond a few hazels and oaks.

First came a woman's words:

"I cannot; he is my husband! And beside, I do not believe he could be made to break into rebellion for furtherance of any ambition!"

"And if he yet did, Frances?"

"I should surely leave him! I would neither be of blood nor of bonds with a traitor!"

(The time came when I remembered those haughty words!)

"And—leaving him?"

"There an end!"

"But—what for—for *me?*"

"No more, Sir Arthur; nothing more!"

"Is all, then, clean forgotten?"

"Perhaps ay!—mayhap nay! But if I am now become an adept at forgetting, wast thou not my skilled teacher?"

"Frances, it was but a brief fancy! I had heard so much of the Lady Catherine's beauty that I came only to see her."

"And—then?"

"Then—I saw the Lady Mary."

"What further?"

"We Ingoldsthorps are a silent race. The glamour of the Earl's fluent speech—which, indeed, was upon all the Court—came over me, too; and—"

"Yes; and?"

"I asked for the Lady Mary's hand as in a dream."

"When thou didst awake, thou didst hear that the Lady Mary had—"

"Had been betrothed to a rebel chieftain."

"Whereupon I had the gracious reversion of thy passion?"

"Cruel! unforgiving!"

"Nay! what fairer compliment could be passed upon thy good discerning taste than that I should show an interest in these Geraldines?—a race which had charms to win even thee from thine allegiance!"

"Ah! it was for a revenge, then?"

"Why, had thy suit prospered, my taking Lord Offaly to my husband had made me thy sister! And, as thou hadst sought a wife that was not I, how now am I cruel for that I sought the next nearest kinship unto thee that was possible? When thou hadst failed to win thine Irish bride, and turned again to poor me, it was too late. I had had the misfortune to be more prosperous in my wooings—to say it so—and had won, together with my gallant groom, heir of this glamouring family, the loss of my life's happiness!"

"Ah, then, thou dost not love him? Help us to put him at a disadvantage, with the King and Council! Already I see his head aloft on London Bridge! And then, my dearest!—then thou wilt forgive thy Cecil, and—"

"Hush! methought I heard a twig crack. Doth that tuft of last year's bracken sway, or was it my fancy? No? Well, at least, forget not that thou art here masquerading under the name of Sir Arthur Ingoldsthorp in some devil's knighthood of thine own creation! The Cecil of old days

is dead, and must not be mentioned in the same month as thy constant self!'

"But, Frances, this husband of thine, thou lovest him not?"

"That to my sorrow!"

"Thou art not touched by his passion, his beauty, his—"

"His tenderness, his courage, his legion of good qualities —no! and all that to my shame."

"At least—"

"At least, Sir Arthur Ingoldsthorp, let me crave a pardon for the interruption, and end it thus: Lord Thomas FitzGerald is my husband, and God's pity on the tender-souled and gallant gentleman that I cannot love him. But thy bribe to me is no bribe now! And when his head shall be on London Bridge, it, even it, I say, shall move me just a shade *more* than if it had been thine own! I shall never recognise bond or blood betwixt a traitor and me; but I shall not conspire with thy Junto to make mine own husband one!"

"Wilt thou be neutral?"

"Being numb, both in body and soul in his regard, I shall not interfere with his fate. Surely that dried bracken is moving?"

"Go on! go on!" said Sir Arthur, with impatience. "Thou wilt not disclose our plot?"

"Knowing it not, I cannot. I have lived some years ayont the north border of England. There they speak of a doomed man as of one who drees his weird! And Lord Thomas shall 'dree' his, for any hand of mine raised to

the contrary. There, an end! This place is eerie; and it were not expedient we should be found romanticking in the woods. Ugh! I am becoming superstitious if I did not hear a moan! Let us go!"

Lady Offaly's ears had not deceived her! I had uttered a groan from the pain of wrenching my poor back, to turn for better hearing, and, if possible, also, that I might see the gallant as he moved to depart.

In my weakened condition, unused to the strong air, I had waxed faint during the conversation, which had become seared into my memory.

But now, there fell upon the silent air a low wail which rose through a sob as of a heart broken, to end in a shriek of ghostly agony, with no word uttered!

"Look! look!" gasped the man who was called Sir Arthur, "what is that?"

"The Banshee of the Geraldines!" faintly murmured Lady Offaly.

"Mother of God! see! there is a ghost with it!" hissed Sir Arthur.

How I bore that scene for the few seconds that I did gaze thereat, I shall never know.

Following the direction of their staring eyes as they sprang out from the foliage which had concealed them—eyes which wandered back and forwards betwixt mine own self and something upon my right hand (I shall never know such tumult again!) I saw a weeny female figure with its back turned towards us. Long black hair—the which with one hand she slowly combed—flowed down to the tuft of moss and bracken. The weird being swayed

backwards and forwards, crooning and wailing as the keeners mourn. This was the Banshee they had spoken of.

But the ghost was I—Baruk Fallon—as I stared aghast, faint and in pain, from the heartless wife of Lord Thomas, or the unscrupulous schemer against his peace, to the small figure which had frozen their guilty hearts!

And so, I remember no more!

. . . . . .

When come to mine own existence again, I found that I was upon my trestle in my room, very faint and ill, a new pain in the back, and little power over my limbs.

Murtagh had been an observer of the scene in the coppice, and, like myself, had heard my Lady declare that if people set temptations in the way of her husband, she, at least, would not stretch forth her hand to save him.

Then he had signed to little Jacob to appear as a Banshee, which (being without any expectation of it) had shocked me. Indeed, the horror of the treachery, the surprise of the Banshee's cry and apparition, together with the strain and injury to my back by rising, had first made me seem a pale ghost to that most guilty pair; and then swoon heavily. Murtagh had little hope ever to see me rally again, so deathlike was my falling.

Many and many times have Murtagh and Vimbela and I talked over that dreadful occasion. And as often hath he assured me that however he may at times have made preparations for the awing of evil-doers, or for the finding out of wicked designs, in this thing he had no hand of prepara-

tion. It was all for my good in health that he brought me out to the air. It was of mere accident that Jacob had the Banshee's character and dress ready that evening. He might have been such a disturbance to the pair, had he been at hand, that the scene would never have occurred, but for his going aside to fold the straying sheep. No, in all this matter was nothing of the wonders which had made dear Murtagh well-nigh as much feared as loved! It was all wondrous even to him; and the solemnity of it all was upon him for many days.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH

THE SAME IS THAT IMMEDIATE SHELL IN WHICH IS THE KERNEL OF THE RECORD; FOR THEREIN IS NARRATED HOW THAT LORD THOMAS RECEIVED A REPORT OF HIS FATHER'S DEATH FOR A TRAITOR BY A PERSON UNBEKNOWN

It is well into the sad year of Grace, 1534, and so far all the fears and foretellings of Murtagh have come true.

Lord Thomas hath removed for residence to Dublin for the greater ease of attending councils, and otherwise discharging the duties of his office of Deputy.

Once more hath Lady Offaly sought her happiness away from her husband; and the reports of the cruel dooms meted out to Sir Thomas More, Fisher, and others, have fitted the mind of Lord Offaly to receive that tiniest spark of disaffection which would suffice, I trow, to set much that is combustuous in him and his followers ablaze.

The love of sumptuousness in dress, which had been always a mark of Lord Thomas, had now arrived at its very highest pitch, not only as regards himself personally, but also as touching the young nobles, the chieftains' sons,

and other gentlemen who had attached themselves to him to the number of about one hundred and forty. To the excitement attending the drilling of these followers, and to their flattery, may be accounted the young Deputy's inability for any judicious reflection. Had not Murtagh most especially warned the young lord against the conspiracy of false praise? "When the flatterers gird them to their work," he quaintly sayeth, "the devil goeth to dine!"

And at the very moment of greatest readiness to respond to a spark, the same had come.

It was a letter assigned to a parish priest, named Edwardus Carey, a man whose sight had become weak from much fine work in small writing and the adorning of missals and manuscripts. He was well known for friendship to the FitzGeralds, who had much served him.

The epistle came to the priest's hand just when he was eye-wearied with his day's work; and whilst he laved and dressed, he flung the writing towards his table in the corner of the hearth. It falling upon the ground was supposed by a visitor to be a wasted paper, and his heel being galled by a boot of ill craft on a long journey, the man put the paper in his shoe, as being smoother to the fretted part than his coarse worsted hosen.

I have not as yet gained knowledge of this man's name.

Arriving at home later, he found the letter which he had forgotten in his wetted shoe. Opening the paper, he read as follows:—

At the sign of "The Moon Cow";
The Fleete; London; 8th June,
1534.

To
The Revd. Father in God,
Edwardus Carey;
In the small Church in High Street,
Dublin.

Greeting!

I, an unknown friend, here enfixed in London, and loving even the dog of a FitzGerald, do yet greatly presume, in essaying the drawing of the Lord Thomas FitzGerald to any keener feeling than he at present hath, of the great filial and family duty, which, before all Governorships, ceremonials, authorities, or ambitions, now lieth so weightily upon him.

For in a word, his noble father, having earlier been taken into honourable trial by the King, hath, just at this writing, been sternly done to death—even the lingering and grotesque death still legal to be done upon traitors!

I implore thee therefore, Father, to say unto him: "Up then! and be a man, and worthy of thy race!" I may not prompt him in particulars, or more plainly set out my plain meaning; or even fill thy time with a longer letter.

But I pass this to thine hand after touch of that of the loyal friend, De la Hoyde —the tried and true in all affairs of the Geraldines, whom I have prayed to add his word of knowledge and appprobation to mine all too brief counsel.

In testimony whereof he hath affixed his sign. And so I rest, Thy dutiful friend and servant,—

THAT-MAY-NOT-NAME-HIM.

To
The Revd. Father in God,
Edwardus Carey,
In the small Church of the
High Street,
Dublin,
Ireland.

Heed this Worthily.—
Thy Friend,
James De la Hoyde.

Thereupon this visitor, knowing De la Hoyde's sign, tenderly spread out the damp letter, and pressed it under a flat stone, between two clean papers. Having let it dry

that night, he took it to the Castle, purposing to hand it in to Lord Thomas by the servants. But it so happened that the Deputy was that morning (followed by a very gay military company) bent upon exercise in the fields beside the Cathedral Church of St. Patrick; and so meeting him, the holder of the letter placed it in the Deputy's hand directly.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH

CONCERNING THE EVIL EFFECT OF THE LYING LETTER UPON LORD THOMAS, AND THE MISFORTUNATE LOSS OF THE DEVIL'S DOCUMENT; FOR THE YOUNG DEPUTY REFUSETH TO GOVERN, AND BECOMETH OVERTLY A REBEL

In a little while, having a countenance pale and grim, his Lordship beckoned a secretary, and ordered him to summon the Council to meet him within two hours at the Chamber in St. Mary's Abbey.

The exercises (through which he had fully gone, so as to prove himself calmly resolved to maintain his own arrangements even as regards a drilling of non-importance) being over, to the Council Chamber duly repaired Lord Thomas.

He was in all the splendour of his satin, his shirt of gold mail, his silken tassels; and he rode through the city with his one hundred and forty followers. All were without stirrups, and all had gay tassels on their helmets. They rode through Dame's Gate, a gorgeous cavalcade; and fording the river, came soon to St. Mary's Abbey.

As the line of splendid-dressed retainers opened to give him room, and bowed as he passed, Lord Thomas only gave a formal salute in response—as from a military officer

to his men. All smiles, all personal cheer and greeting were absent from his pale, drawn, and frowning face.

The Sword-bearer was now about to take his place next before the Lord Deputy, but his Lordship signed him back, to the surprise of all the beholders, and passed forward himself.

In the Council Chamber all had hastily assembled; for it was bruited that Lord Thomas had heard bad news in some sort, and was about to take a bold step.

As he entered, all arose and bowed; to which, again, Lord Thomas only gave a military salutation. He appeared to approach the chair as usual, but went no farther than the foot of the daïs.

He looked around him, all remaining erect. O'Nelan, clad in his richest official robes, had his harp in his hand.

In the dead and solemn silence, the quavering voice of the priest offering a brief prayer was heard. All the members of the Council crossed themselves at the "Amen," and then the silence within contrasted with the hum of voices without.

At last, raising his head, and glancing at the Sword of State borne at his side, Lord Thomas, still from the floor beside the daïs, spoke as follows, on that dreadful 11th day of June, beginning straight, without titles, names, or forms of address:—

"However injuriously we Geraldines be entreated, however thrown for our own defence upon our own arms, when neither our services nor our good intentions towards our Prince's Crown availeth, yet it mote not be forgotten, when the hostility which I now profess and declare is told of,

that we were not churls nor villains, but soldiers and gentlemen.

"This Sword of Estate is in future yours—not mine!

"I received it when I swore but to use it for your benefit. I should stain mine honour were I to use it to your hurt!

"Now have I need for my own sword, because that I can entrust it better!

"As for the general Sword of the Realm, it deceiveth with a pretty scabbard.

"But its pestilent edge is already weltering in the blood of a Geraldine; and I may not doubt but it is being whetted afresh for a greater destruction of our numbers!

"Therefore, save yourselves as from open enemies! I am none of Henry's Lieutenants: he hath made me his foe! I am evermore better minded to conquer if I may, than to govern as his Deputy! I would meet him afield liefer than work further for him in any office!

"And if all the hearts in Ireland—ay! and in England and in Spain—that have griefs and sorrows urging them thereto, would join in this affray, as I strongly hope they will, they should soon know of his tyranny and cruelty!

"And, for the same, ages yet unborn will brand him amongst the monsters of the olden days—of most hideous and most abominable memory!

"Here am I to return to you this Sword—the badge of an authority which I decline longer to wield, and of an obedience which I refuse to yield!"

So saying, and with a very stately gesture, he signed to the Sword-bearer to place the weapon of State upon the table.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH

WHERE WE FIND RELATED THE FURTHER DOINGS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER—THE DULL HOMILY SPEECH OF CHANCELLOR CROMER—AND THERE IS LITTLE MORE, AS SUCH DULL WRITINGS MUST BE BRIEF

THE whole bearing of the young Deputy, the firm, rich voice, the dignity, might, and grace of his movements worked as magic or miracles on all there present.

A roar of pride and sympathy arose as from a single throat. In the words of the escutcheon of the great family:

"Crom-a-boo! A Geraldine a-boo!" shouted the followers.

As by word of command, every brand leaped from its sheath, and lightnings flashed therefrom over the pale faces of the Council members.

Now for the first time bowing, Lord Thomas was preparing to leave the Council Hall; and at a sign from him many of his brilliant following had already moved out, formally saluting the Council. But all were in a great fever of excitement, which they choked down with great strain.

Some members of the Council, to whom swords were ever a terror, now beholding the peaceful departure which

they had hardly expected, breathed easier, and were only so far enmoved towards their own dignity as to decide to stay still until, as they hoped, all the gallants would have retired.

But now, stepping forward and raising his hand as about to speak, Archbishop Cromer, whom the Earl of Kildare had benefited by translation to a higher see upon almost the very hour of his last triumph and return, saluted Lord Thomas, and eagerly took hold of him by the wrist.

At a gesture from the latter, all were silent, and the Archbishop began. His sentences—of which I give the first as an example—were long, heavy, difficult to follow, and ponderous both in meaning and tone. His manner was that of a cleric who preacheth, rather than that of a loving friend who truly and intently offereth counsel in patience.

The point of what he undertook to say was that if such a deed as Lord Thomas's address implied had indeed been done, and certainly proved, then he had a grievance confessedly; yet that he should await proof before taking action so terrible as he had foreshadowed. But he laboured the point, to loss of it, in this fashion:

"My Lord,—Although hatred be very often the prompt attendant upon truth—as when we see him for the most part disliked of men who declareth his mind—yet, notwithstanding, I am so full assured of your Lordship his beneficent leaning towards me; and inasmuch as your Honour cannot but be certain of mine entire affection towards you, I am emboldened, notwithstanding this company of armed men here present, frankly and boldly to

utter that which, by me declared and by your Lordship followed, will turn, God willing, to the avail of you, your friends, your allies, and your country."

From which long preamble, Cromer droned on (I put it so not out of disrespect, but because the word fits), to say that any man should look before leaping, should sound water before sailing his ship on it, and should not look upon the levying of arms against his Prince as a May-game or Midsummer-day sport.

"What should move your Lordship to this sudden attempt, I know not," cried he; and this with great feeling and reason, so much moving Lord Thomas that for the first time he sat down to listen more calmly. "If it be the death of your honoured father, my cherished friend—remember it is as yet but secretly murmured, not published with authority.

"I should grant that zeal in resenting the execution of your father might be in some respect commendable. But reason calls out to await a certain report, and meanwhile to suspend the revenge."

Now, had Cromer ceased here, there is as little doubt as may be that Lord Thomas would have given some time to consideration. And, as the cruel report could not have been proved, the Earl being untouched, all would have settled down again for the time.

But the Archbishop maundered off, pleased with his own sanctimony, and with the sound of his own voice in a so-gay company, to tell of the duty of subjects in according reverence to all conduct of sovereigns whatsomever. He had for his absurd injunction that a subject, even when

his father has been unjustly slain, should bear with the King who killed him, "inasmuch as the name of a King is sacred, and that of a rebel, in any sort, odious!"

Furthermore, the greater half of those present did not understand the discourse, and at the first discontented muttering of Lord Thomas's friends, O'Niall and O'Connor, much restlessness began to be shown.

It was to one of those chieftains that Lord Thomas had first shown the fateful letter, after hastily perusing it himself. It was passed by him to the other; but when Lord Thomas came to ask for it, the paper had in some way become missing.

It was at this juncture that the fate of a great family, and, in a sense, the same of the country, came to hang on the pastiming of a dustman's little child!

But of this we only came to be advertised a long while thereafter.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST

GIVING REPORT OF THE MARTIAL ODE OF O'NELAN, THE BARD, WHICH, WITH ITS EXCITEMENTS, CAUSED LORD THOMAS TO CROSS A RUBICON IN HIS LIFE; BUT GIVETH HIM THE NAME OF "THE SILKEN THOMAS," IN THIS HIS REBELLION

It were hard to say how long Cromer's address would have been; but at one of the noisiest interruptions, Lord Thomas raised his head and addressed a few words, with great force and eloquence, to the Archbishop; upon which O'Nelan, the Harper, struck several rich chords, and loudly broke into these verses, singing them to the music of the harp:

"Hear him!
The storm in the boughs of the oak
Roars with his voice! Let a bard,
Striking full chords in the pause of his tempest of words,
Tell of this powerful youth!

"Hear him!
The eye is a-dazed with the blare of his presence!
Spread are our nostrils with balm and with spice of his robe!
Mouths that are open in awe of his eloquent words
Taste them, as airs that are wafted from feasts in the hall!
Great was the Sire!
But greater the Son of the Sire!
Who shall thrust back, to the grasp of his powerful hand,

Sword that he scorns—
Or the Rule that is held under Rule?
See him!
"The bow in the sky
Vainly would rival the satin and gold of his garb—
The silk-tasselled helmet, and armour of chains, in his gear!
Courage with him is told forth in the tones of a lute.
Go 'SILKEN THOMAS'—
So shall men call thee—and here hast thou lingered too long

"Hear him!
Shout woe to the treacherous—carlin or king
Hear him, and fear him!
And shout in your pride of his name!
Young are his locks—
But if wisdom and valour make grey,
Then is there wonder to see how the waves on his brow
Ripple in torrents of gold!
Haste from the bondage of ruling—
Out to the air!
Speed, 'SILKEN THOMAS'—and draw
Sword of thine own for a vengeance on those
Who betray!

"Rise!
Speed thee!
STRIKE!
. . . . . .
I have sung!"
. . . . . .

With a few throbbing chords in a martial rhythm, O'Nelan finished his Recitativo; and it was found that the pulse of the measure had gotten into the feet of the men, so that for a moment after he had done their tramping marked the time!

Then a shout of excitement rent the air; all calm and meditation left Lord Thomas's manner; and the influence of whatever was wise or telling in Cromer's speech passed quite away.

Heavily stamping his foot, he signed once more for silence, and the cheering ceased with suddenness.

Then the ill-advised young man addressed the Archbishop (who had only asked him to await confirmation, not to forego a righteous vengeance), in some such words as these :—

"My Lord Chancellor, I came not hither this day to take advice what I should do, but to give you and the others to understand what I am minded to do.

"It is easy for the sound to give counsel of patience—of patience to the sick. But, sir, if this or a like sore had smarted yourself as much as the same festereth me, perchance your impatience had not been less than mine!

"You would wish me to honour my Prince. But a higher duty willeth me to reverence my father.

"Plainly, I will not hold him for my King who hath executed mine innocent parent with such tyranny, and who, in probablement, hath an equal design upon me, and the residue of our House!

"If it be not otherwise than my weird to fail, then catch that catch can! I will take the market as I find it, doing my best only!

"I deem it better to meet death with liberty and valour, than—under the adulterous, incestuous, murderous, and blasphemous King Henry—live in bondage and villainy!

"Take ye charge of this polluted Sword. I fling it in scorn before you! Henceforward, I shall know how to live by mine own!"

Suiting the deed to the saying, the impetuous being snatched the Sword of State from its bearer's hand, and

dashed it contemptuously upon the table of green cloth. Then, grasping the gold and encrusted hilt of his own falchion, he snatched it forth with a hissing and a ring, swung it whistling and flashing around his head thrice, and recovered the point, to rest in the mailed gauntlet of his left hand.

Cromer and the others would have once more pointed out how the gist of their advice was but only to await confirmation of the rumour; but with a final flourish of his sword, and a gesture which, as it were, pushed all argument aside, Lord Thomas strode to the door. The gods being minded to destroy him had first made him mad. That which was his destiny he must needs fulfil.

Placing himself at the head of his followers, Lord Thomas recrossed the river, and passed with the same magnificence throngh the city to Oxmantown Green, but this time he and his following all had their swords drawn; and their progress was made to a quaint war-song of the olden time, led by O'Nelan, the Harper!

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND

THE PART OF THE DUSTMAN'S CHILD IN THE HISTORY OF THE GERALDINES, WHICH IS THE HISTORY OF IRELAND AT THE TIME

THUS, upon the Feast of Saint Barnabas, 11th June, 1534, did Lord Thomas FitzGerald, by overt act and deliberate, pass a rubicon in his life, burn his bridges behind him, and start upon the dreary and fateful courses of an avowed rebel and traitor.

As I have before recorded that a little child's doings bore upon the matter at this touch of affairs, it behoves me to explain how it happened, which is done as followeth :—

It was at the ascent of the hill at Ship Street that the man whose name I have never learned handed the stained and fatal letter to Lord Thomas. Many have said that the man was no other than the friend, James De la Hoyde, himself. But, although he was in Dublin, and was deceived into signing the accursed letter, it hath been well-ascertained by Murtagh that he did not hand the letter with his own hand.

The same Lord Thomas, being too far shaken with horror and anger at the ghastly news to trust himself with speech, handed the paper to his companion, O'Niall, who was none too good a scholar even at a desk, but none at all upon a

restive charger without stirrups. After a few seconds, O'Niall passed the letter to O'Connor. He, busied with the form of the march upon which they were bound, neglected the paper, so that it slipped from his gauntlet, and a horse partly set a hoof on it.

Half a minute after, a disconsolate little child, weeping because he had not been called to see the cavalcade, toddled, sobbing, in the horse-tracks to the top of the hill. There he picked up the folded and crumpled paper, and resolved that his father should see it.

But, alas! soon mixed with other gutter treasures, that letter, an engine of ruin, or an instrument of salvation to so many, was tossed upon a shelf in a dark corner of a gloomy room in a squalid house at end of a dark alley leading off Ship Street, near to Dublin Castle.

It had been the cunning work of Thomas Cannon, sometime secretary to Sir William Skeffington. He had been advised, assisted, and bribed to make that letter by the fickle lover of Frances Fortescue, now Lady Offaly.

Lord Thomas inquired for the letter of O'Niall, who remembered passing it to O'Connor. This last said he had made no study of it, had not known that it was Lord Thomas's way of learning the bad news, and knew not what had become of it!

"It matters not at all, my friends," said Lord Offaly; "the statement was clear that, after having been tried, my poor father had undergone the several punishments of a traitor! It matters much to me, however, since the letter is lost, that it was approved and endorsed by our true friend, De la Hoyde, whose signature is well known to me.

The question is not whether, just now at the Abbey, I did rightly, but whether will my friends join me in this contention or nay?"

Then these two, O'Niall and O'Connor, gave him their hands, and kissed the crosses upon their swords' handles, in a form of oath of allegiance to Lord Thomas, or "The Silken Thomas," as we shall have now to call him.

But a new toy called off the child's memory from the letter he had picked up on the hillside; and there in the darkness it lay for many a sad month, with its secret of how a true friend—to wit, James De la Hoyde—had been cheated into affixing his sign to a lie, in proof that he had read it, and counselled the action it recommended. Of all this more anon.

When it was too late, that paper saw the light. But when at last it did, the treacherous trick of Thomas Cannon was disclosed; and one hard heart softened and broke, bitterly remembering its hardness, and having in mind also the haughty words: "I will be neither of bond nor blood with a traitor!"

That heart was Lady Offaly's! Just when her pity came for the hasty but deceived husband of her youth, her own father's head was being hung up for that of a rebel, to the scorn of all loyal subjects of the vilest monster who ever sate him upon a throne, since Caligula or Nero!

It is not for mortals to peer into the future; and not knowing how she was to be related by blood to a rebel, even Sir Adrian Fortescue, her father, she had departed out of the family and home of her husband, because he,

under mighty provocation and deception, had defied the King. It was a bitter remembrance!

All of which, contrasting with the generous, sweet, and tender-loving of Moina for me, doth fill me with rapture and content for myself, and with a love of pity for the gallant, sad, strong, and helpless, abounding, yet lacking, rich and most poor Lord Thomas!

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD

HEREIN ONE READETH HOW MURTAGH DREW HIS BOW AT A VENTURE, AND SMOTE PATRICK CANNON BETWEEN THE JOINTS OF HIS HARNESS, HIS ARROW BEING THE WORD "CECIL." THEREAFTER THE HONOURS OF THE CHAPTER ARE WITH LITTLE JACOB RANSTRAW, PLAYING THE DEVIL, OR WITH MURTAGH PROPHESYING FURTHER SORROW, OR AS THE GENTLE READER MAY CHOOSE TO APPORTION THE SAME

METHINKS I shall never forget the feelings with which we at Maynooth heard of the terrible report from England, of its results upon Lord Thomas FitzGerald, of the scene at St. Mary's Abbey, and of the overt acts by which the young Deputy had signalised his start upon his insurrectionary course.

That day Murtagh had smuggled in the little Jacob in a basket to amuse me. I had given him a lesson in writing, for pursuance of which he had taken away pens, ink, and paper, when Murtagh carried him back in a sack of sheepskin.

There are some who, in all eventualities, say, "Ah! I told thee so!" be the same false or true. And from my own small coign of observance I seem to note that the wiser and truer the prophet, the less he harketh back to his

own predictions and predications in proof of his wisdom before events.

But such an one was not Murtagh; and when, as now happened daily, the people said, "Well had it been for us all if Lord Thomas had heeded thy counsellings in the market-place," Murtagh would respond: "What I said there was less directed to Lord Thomas than it was to you all, who would, by your flatteries, excitements, drummings, and so forth, make him fancy he had a force at back to face the King withal!"

"Hast thou no further helpfulness in thy mouth, Murtagh?" they would say.

"At least, I have some truth," he would reply; "but when did truth ever seem helpful to a pottle of omadhauns?"

"Call us what you will, Murtagh, but prophesy about us!"

"Then, having heard, be silent! Ye have cheered O'Nelan when he sang of triumphs to the sad young nobleman: your plaudings now to me would therefore be an offence. And I say that for all your applause, in a day to come ye will melt away from beside him, as the drops fall at the toasting of cheese!"

"Once before, Murtagh," cried Patrick Cannon—"but, then, my Lord Thomas was present, and gave thee backing against me—once before I rebuked thee for presaging evil days."

"They have come! they have come!" shouted many voices. "The Earl of Kildare is murthered, and for his duty as a son the young Lord, who hath ever been good to

us from a boy, hath to make himself a rebel, or let a father's blood cry aloud from the ground! It is blood—it is death!—it all is even as Murtagh hath said!"

"But now he foretelleth what is worse than death—desertion, cowardice, treachery! Will ye have it said that ye will drop off from the following of the son, whose only traitorhood is the denial of allegiance to the Prince who hath slain the father?"

It was a cunning line to take.

The word had that day been passed around that every retainer of the Earl of Kildare, of age and strength to carry arms, was to make such preparation in weapons, and such plans for his family and affairs as would fit him for taking the field with Lord Thomas, in his vengeance for the murder of his father, at notice of an hour.

To be told that many of them would fall away was to charge them with both falsehood and untruth.

Murtagh had stood with arms folded and head bent down, whilst this view of affairs was reaching the minds of the group.

"Hast naught to say, then, worthy Prophet? It is hard to swallow such a word as 'treachery' in Maynooth," sneered Cannon, noticing and pressing home the effect of his interpretation. "You are frowning. Hast thou no butter to send thy bitters down the easier with? Not one word, good Prophet—one weeny word?"

Murtagh made no sign. The people began to murmur.

"Not one *little* word," pursued Cannon, "wherewithal to silence me, since Lord Thomas is not here to do so?"

"I have such a word," said Murtagh quietly.

"*Say it*," challenged Cannon.

"It may only be said in thy private ear," said Murtagh.

"What?" shouted the bully, now feeling sure that he had the Prophet at a disadvantage—not supposing that one word could silence him whilst on the popular side by his resentment of the prediction of treachery. "What? Here we be, the followers of the Geraldines, and it is our pride to think that there is not a man amongst us who would not cling to them in evil times like the wives of their hearts, or like those that the same breasts have suckled! Thou opinest otherwise, and yet thou wilt not silence me in argument before the people!"

"Not with argument, Patrick Cannon; that were waste of words. One single word will suffice! We shall call you a fiery, untamed horse, without offence, and I shall be the whisperer. Ye shall all," said Murtagh, facing the crowd—"ye shall all see by Patrick Cannon's face whether my one weeny word strikes home. If he will it, for certainment then, at his desire I shall again whisper; but this time three words. Yet if he can only promise for you that ye will cling to the Geraldines, as do the wives of your bosoms, it will be that he hath no better thought of some of ye than I have mine own self; for lo! Lady Offaly hath left her husband for ever!"

"The word, the word!" cried Patrick Cannon rudely, fearing to lose the triumph of defeating Mad Murtagh in public if the other matter were allowed to intrude.

Without the waiting of a rook's caw, Murtagh stepped forward in such manner as gave Cannon's ruddy face to

the full view of the crowd; and then, putting his lips near to his ear, said his one word in a clear whisper:

"*Cecil!*"

The shot of a hand gun at the carle's head could not have had more dire an effect.

He staggered back, no trace of colour abiding in his cheeks. His breath was caught in the gasping of his surprise.

Pale, trembling, open-eyed, he stared at Murtagh.

But as for him, with folded arms, he calmly looked at the crowd.

A murmur of wonder ran amongst the people, and after much gesturing and conference, Christopher Parese, foster-brother of Lord Thomas, made himself spokesman.

"The one weeny word seemeth to have pleased thee so much, Patrick, let Murtagh give thee the other three."

Any kind reader of these poor records will know what to expect. Cecil was the real but concealed name of Lady Offaly's lover, who had spoken of the plot to make his successful rival for Frances Fortescue's hand defy the King. But Murtagh's use of it might, Cannon thought, be a strange accident. Patrick knew much of the life of his skilled and unrighteous brother, Thomas. He at least knew the name by which the chief conspirator was travelling. He would risk testing Murtagh's acquaintance with that.

"Speak!" hissed he, advancing, stooped in attitude and dour of expression, with hands clawing the air, and heeding the attentive crowd as little as a flock of sheep.

The two met in full gaze of the gathering.

"*Sir Arthur Ingoldsthorp!*" whispered Murtagh.

"Spawn of Satan!" shrieked the terrified man, "thy father will come to his own one day. And may I live to see thee burned for a wizard!"

He turned to dash away; but the crowd liked fair sport too well, and he was stopped.

"Was Murtagh right?" cried several voices.

"He is the devil—let me go!" cried Cannon, struggling fiercely to break away.

"Why, then, if Murtagh knows as Beelzebub does, we may have it before us to desert the house of Kildare," cried one of the quicker wits present.

"Though each one here present did so," cried Christopher Parese, "I, at least, shall never forget that Lord Thomas was nurtured at my own mother's breast!"

"We are all born, Parese," murmured Murtagh sadly, "but we are not dead. Thy noble foster-brother trusteth thee wholly indeed, but thou art not singular in thy willingness to die with him. Let Cannon go!" he cried, as he saw preparations being made for sousing the fellow in the forge pond.

No sooner was the terrified villain put upon his feet again than he stopped, covered his face with his arms to save his eyes from the mud and sand with which the people had begun to pelt him, and fled at full speed along the road which stretched towards the park gate of Carton.

"Holy Mother!" hoarsely gasped the wretch, pausing to recover his breath as soon as he reached the coppice, wherein Murtagh and Jacob so much abode, and towards which, in his terror, he had fled. "How much doth he know? Should he have discovered that young

Cecil used brother Thomas to indite that letter, or that the same, as 'Sir Arthur Ingoldsthorp,' hath visited Lady Offaly, who hath now vanished from her home, neither Thomas nor I is safe in his life for a day. Murtagh, curse him, is not so much mad as he is in league with the devil!"

But when the fellow lifted up his eyes and saw little Jacob dressed in black, with horns on head and a sheet of letter paper before him, upon which he was making great performance of writing with the tip of his tail-barb, he uttered one fearful shriek and fell on the ground foaming at the mouth.

Thereafter he never appeared near to Maynooth; and all attempts to injure Murtagh only did good to my friend.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH

HOW THE WANT OF VERIFICATION OF THE REPORT OF LORD KILDARE'S DEATH IS OF NONE EFFECT IN MOVING LORD THOMAS TO PATIENCE AND CAUTION. HE AVOIDETH MURTAGH AND ALL OTHER SAGE COUNSELLORS, AND MADLY SEEKETH ALLIES IN THE POPE, THE KING OF SPAIN, AND THE BUTLERS OF OSSORY, BUT FAILETH EVERYWHERE

It is in very truth believed that when, in the Council Hall, Archbishop Cromer, the Chancellor, had seized the Silken Thomas's hand, and pleaded with him to wait for a confirmation of the evil tidings before taking even justifiable action against his King, he had every desire and hope that the son of his powerful patron would pause; in which case some credit could not fail of sticking to him—Cromer. A sense of debt sometimes breeds a grudge against the benefactor, albeit it must not be assumed that the Chancellor felt such.

But when (enraged at being told that a subject should bow when a king smote off the head of that subject's father) the "headlong Hotspur" had taken his desperate course, Cromer had no thought saving to still get credit; alas! now upon the other side of the opportunity.

No one could deny his having sought to restrain Lord

Thomas; but also, no one should be before him in the reporting of the matter, and in the expressing of a loyal abhorrence of what he could not prevent.

Accordingly, the Chancellor prepared a long, whining description of the scene, which read like one of his own homilies; and sent his own confidential servant, Thomas Brode, therewith to the King. But other action adverse to Lord Thomas had also been taken.

The Council, which had for dignity's sake remained sitting upon the departure of the armed party, after a further brief conference, issued an order to the Lord Mayor that he should forthwith cause the arrest, by his people, of Lord Thomas, with O'Connor, O'Niall, and the other leaders.

But the Council had reckoned without their host, as the tap-room saying hath it! The Mayor, who had no means of knowing the extent of the designs of the ex-Deputy, looked upon him as a mere brawler, who had tired of a delegated authority, but who would at once become mild again if taken seriously.

To have promptly carried out the injunction of the Council would have been flattering and pleasing to his own sense of importance; but he found it impossible.

Anyone who hath had patience to read this poor record will have gained some knowledge, from mine own account of my miseries, of the plague called the sweating sickness.

Now, just at the moment of the rebellion of the Silken Thomas, this malady had laid a devilish hold upon the poor city of Dublin; and when the Lord Mayor came to count up his force of day and night watchmen, of constables, and of the gallow-glasses of which he had control

by virtue of his office, he found that sixty in every hundred were down with the plague, or else in bare stages of recovery therefrom—languid, and unfit for service. This not to mention that many had died outright.

The Silken Thomas, besides, and his following, had withdrawn from the city, and retired far into the country.

His great blame was that he more sought to prepare for overt rebellion against the King's majesty (declaring all goods and property of his subjects forfeited) than to discover whether in verity his father had been executed as a traitor as reported, or nay.

It is known that the last ship which had been able to leave any Irish port for London was that in which Thomas Brode, bearing the Chancellor's report, had sailed, owing to the falling upon the coast of wild westerly and south-westerly gales, which never intermitted for longer space than an hour during eleven days.

Many ships did run for Irish ports; but it was not ever heard that any proof of the death of the Earl was received thereby.

When the gales subsided, those who knew of the sweating plague turned away from Ireland, and in any event, the Silken Thomas had taken a step from which he could only retreat by surrendering his body and estates to the detested Sir William Skeffington. Certes! even a message from his father that he was still in the land of the living would not now have oiled the waves in that storm. And the old rival of the Geraldines plainly showed his joy at the fell success of the plot, and the falling of the hasty youth into the very trap against which Murtagh had so clearly warned him!

"They will urge thee to break away from rule under a great King," said he, "and to regard him as the exterminating foe of thy house."

Thus passed a week, ten days, and a fortnight; and news went about that Lord Thomas had made his calculations, and was now enrousing the country in terms which showed that he, at least, was still solemnly convinced that his father had been executed.

The interval betwixt his action in the Council Chamber and his taking the field openly had been part used in entreating for allies.

He wrote to the Pope, claiming that his cause was a righteous and a filial one, and proposing that His Holiness should accept the sovereignty of Ireland, which country he, Lord Thomas, would hold of the Holy Father, upon tribute to be paid annually.

He sent an ambassador (so entituled, forsooth) whom I think to have been the friend James of the De la Hoydes to the King of Spain, and asked for an alliance, jogging his memory, especially as regards Ireland, the Claddagh in Galway, and the west, upon the footing and hospitality which had been so extensively given to subjects of His Majesty.

He also tried to get the Emperor, Charles of Austria, to join him against the King who had divorced Catherine.

Lastly, he wrote to his cousin, Butler of Ossory, so long the rival, if not the enemy, of his house, offering him a sound friendship for ever, and proposing to divide Ireland with him. A sufficiency of time having passed, I should suppose that this proposal told of the Pope's

reply not having been exactly what he wished, as else he would have added: "Subject to the suzeraignty of His Holiness the Pope, and a tribute to be paid to the Holy Father."

But upon the receipt of a rebuff from Ossory, the Silken Thomas decided to seek no more alliances; and as the response from the country generally was almost as favourable as he had expected, he determined that his first warlike action should be a ravaging of the country about Kilkenny, as his rejoinder to the letter of Butler, which was as follows:—

"Taking pen in hand to write you my resolute answer, I muse in the very first line by what name to call you—my lord or my cousin—seeing your notorious treason hath disdained your honour, and your desperate lewdness shamed your kindred!

"You are so liberal in parting stakes with me that a man would ween you had no right unto the game,—so importunate in craving my company as if you would persuade me to hang with you for good fellowship. Did you think that James was so mad as to gape for gagions, or so ungracious as to sell his truth for a bit of Ireland?

"Were it so, as it cannot be, that the chickens you reckon were both hatched and feathered, yet be thou sure in this quarrel I had rather die thine enemy than live thy partner.

"For the kindness you proffer me, and the good love in the end of your letter, the best way I can purpose to requite you is in advising you yet to look well ere you leap.

"Ignorance and error, with a certain appearance of duty, have carried you to this folly, not yet so rank but it may be cured. The King is a vessel of bounty and mercy; and His Majesty may be beseeched not to count your words malicious, but rather belched forth for heat and impotency, except yourself, by heaping offences, discover in them a mischievous and wilful meaning. Farewell!"

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH

HOW ARCHBISHOP ALEN FLATTERETH THE REBEL BY FEARING HIM, AND MURTAGH CHANGETH HIS OWN WAYS IN HOPE OF PUTTING WISE WAYS BEFORE LORD THOMAS. ITEM: THE MURDERS OF CITIZENS, AND THE PROVISIONING OF DUBLIN CASTLE

THERE is so much of what is wise and sound in this stern letter that when Murtagh heard it read by me he moaned that it was not heeded, and said:

"Alas! the weird of the Silken Thomas it is that letteth him from taking this brave and even holy advice!"

There is no doubt that the above letter so displeased the Silken Thomas (with its brusque rejection of a friendship not offered without some sacrifice of pride) that it fired him to violence, even beside the circumstances of the rebellion upon which he had entered.

An old master hath a proverb that Beelzebub tempteth new beginners in the ways of evil; and certainly the first efforts and forays of the young hotspur met with success for our marvelling! None had taken his first threats seriously; and whilst he had acted upon calculations and preparations, none of the same had been made by those whom he attacked.

His march through Fingal was a triumph, and without

any further hesitation he set himself to make a conquest of Dublin.

Of public men, the first to pay the Silken Thomas the compliment of fear was Alen, Archbishop of Dublin. He, with Lord Finglas, took refuge in the Castle of Dublin, knowing that he had little kindness to hope for from a Geraldine; for the most close, the most reliable, the most interesting information ever supplied to the King's Council of the doings and negligences of the Kildares in and out of office, had been for long written by Archbishop Alen, and by John Alen, Master of the Rolls.

But whilst such timid action by a man so well informed, aggrandised Lord Thomas as showing that he was to be feared, and that no hope was to be entertained of immediate protection against his advance, Alen's further step of essaying flight into England well-nigh created a panic! Men thought that the Archbishop (whom, as we know, the Earl of Kildare had removed from the Chancellorship to make room for Cromer from Armagh) did not consider even Dublin Castle strong enough against the young rebel.

From that moment began the proudest few hours of the Silken Thomas's life—the last blaze-up of his glory's candle before it began to burn red towards an end in smoke, noisomeness, and stench!

For the people bowed down before him, and followed him everywhere with cheers; those that wrote accounts of the doings of the time to the King of Spain called him "The Prince of Ireland"; and although the Lord Mayor remained loyal, sending Alderman Francis Herbert

with information to the King, there was unconcealed triumph when it was known that the idol of the day had actually taken the field, with some show of aid and countenance from the officials amongst the citizens, whilst abiding the King's answer.

But a change had come over Murtagh.

No longer wearing his goat-skins—no longer playing the part of prophet—he flitted betwixt Maynooth and Dublin in a sober garb, ever engaged in personal helpfulness to Lord Thomas; but also working for peace, and removing irritations on one side or the other.

I hold him to have been foremost of all men of the time in discovering that although the Earl of Kildare had been sent as a prisoner to the Tower of London, he had not been executed.

And I further believe that according as he heard of the Silken Thomas's movements, he hurried towards Dublin, or back to Maynooth, seeking to tell him of the deceit that had been put upon him.

No one ever saw him on cart or on horse. None saw him run. Only it was known that he was seeking the young Lord by the morning in Dublin, or in Kilmainham; and by the evening was at the gates of the Castle at Maynooth.

I saw how his face fell dark and sad; how his body became pinched and thin. And how did I not love my dear Aunt Vimbela of the sweet voice, when she said:

"Murtagh, thou art worn and a-weary. Go no more to the wood of the oaks. See! Martyn is often left lonely in these troublous times. I sadden for the boy! Bring

hither thy bed, and share our cake and our cup. Thy way is free—thou canst come and go at will. But there is a room prepared above for thee, which in thine absences Moina and I will make ready for thee. As for our board—it already owes more to thee than to us. Bring little Jacob to a cot in thy room; and with thy platter on the table, say the blessing for us every day."

Therefore Murtagh rested and tarried with us; and methinks I strengthen daily in the cheer of it all.

Now, having quickly conceived the desire to comfort his following with spoils as well as to stop the supplies to the Castle, and put harm on his enemies, Lord Thomas saw possibility of killing those several birds with one stone, by the ravishing of Fingal—from which district chiefly the provender for the Castle had come. Here, again, he had a triumphal march; and with great spoil returned.

But when nearing Dublin, he found that people lay in wait for him at Kilmainham, bent upon rescuing the prey. To these he gave actual battle; and if any hope of his being induced to submit himself to the King's majesty had existed up to that hour, it fell back lifeless then! For no fewer of the citizens of Dublin than eighty were slain; and as they died in opposing the movements of one who had avowed his resolution to oppose himself to the King, it may be said that the act was not one of battle, but of treasonable murder of loyal subjects.

Natheless, in the consternation which followed such slaughter, the citizens, whose Mayor had sent Alderman Herbert to the King with letters, had to burn a little incense to the devil, appearing to consent to the Silken

Thomas's request for leave to besiege the Castle from Ship Street. The Lord Mayor was at the time in touch with the Constable of the castle, and found means to send in twenty tons of wine, twenty-four tons of beer, two thousands of dried ling fishes, and sixteen hog's heads of salt beef.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH

THE MURDER OF THE ARCHBISHOP AT ARTAYNE MAKES IT TOO LATE FOR "THE SILKEN THOMAS" TO TALK OF HIS REPENTANCE OF HIS REBELLION

WITH Archbishop Alen had retired to the Castle, as I have recorded, Lord Finglas; but it was by himself that the timid cleric determined to essay to escape out of the country.

Would to God that either his heart for courage or his head for wit had served him better!

Evening fell, and the Archbishop stole on board the ship as it lay at Dame's Gate. He had engaged for his pilot a man named Bartholomew FitzGerald, in whom he had complete confidence; and so early betook himself to sleep.

Whether the start had been made, as some do say, too late upon the tide, or whether the night was obscured, or the winds were unfavourable, or the pilot was treacherous, may never be known. But several hours before dawn the Archbishop was called, and information was given him that the vessel had gone ashore on the Clontarf coast.

After many childish pleadings with the pilot to "shove of," to "resume his journey," etc., Alen, moaning of his folly in leaving the Castle, was forced to land, and to seek

what shelter he could find at Artayne. Hoping to conceal himself for the present, he took refuge in the house of Hothe, and looked to be able to re-embark by the next tide.

But the Silken Thomas, accompanied by his uncles, Oliver and John, and followed by Nicholas Wafer and John Teling, had hurried round the estuary by land, and at once proceeded to the house of the man Hothe. The two followers were sent in, and they found the Archbishop cowering and trembling in bed.

Urged to speed by a shout from Sir Oliver, Teling dragged the wretched priest out of the house in his shirt of night.

The moment he saw the Geraldines, he dropped upon his knees, and begged for pity on a Christian man and an Archbishop, for the love of Heaven, and of God!

It was plain, upon the instant, that the Archbishop had a conviction of conscience as regards his treatment of the FitzGeralds the moment he found himself at the mercy of three of the family.

His own five brothers had written to the Warden of Youghal College, urging him to move the King for the arrest of Lord Thomas as a traitor, which at that time was a slander to say, and was so by nearly a month.

Lord Thomas held no argument with the enemy of his father; but doubtless moved by his submission and his appeal, he simply glanced contemptuously at the Archbishop and turned away, saying in Irish: "Beir naim an Bodhach!" meaning, "Take away the churl!" or, "Take the clown away from me!"

It cannot be denied that the same words could bear the meaning: "Make away with the clown for me!" But it is not to be believed that Lord Thomas meant the words to be received in this sense, although, before he could turn round, Wafer and Teling had read that meaning into them, and in an instant had dashed out the Archbishop's brains.

An accomplice, even that very Robert Reilly who was once servant to the Earl in the Tower, and who surrendered to the authorities, declares that he was himself sent here to Maynooth with a casket which Lord Thomas had taken from Alen, upon the day following the assassination. Of this, we all upon the spot knew nothing. It need not be said, that those of the following of the FitzGeralds, who have known Lord Thomas from boyhood, are very sure that he intended no more than the removal of the unfriendly Archbishop to some place of security, where he could be no longer a spy upon his actions, as he had been the reporter of those of his father.

Where the incident afterwards came to touch us was when my brother Charles received instructions from Lord Thomas to proceed to Rome, and plead for absolution for the killing of the Archbishop.

Alas! there came back, but by another messenger, the most horrible, the most barbarously-worded edict of excommunication that could be imagined by men, or by devils I have the paper before me by copy as I write; and its minutiæ are quite fantastic in their savagery, under form of a Church Edict! [1]

[1] See Appendix.

Thus, step by step, did Silken Thomas sink deeper and deeper in the slough of his destiny, and—what is more, and different—of his sinning.

And when the news of the murder of the Archbishop reached Murtagh, he flung his face down upon his folded arms, which were pressed upon the table, and moaned sadly the words of his prophecy in the market-place:

"Blood!" he murmured; "blood, and death!"

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH

HOW THE EARL OF KILDARE FARED IN THE TOWER OF LONDON, COMFORTED BY HIS LADY-WIFE; UNTIL BY SHOCK OF NEWS OF HIS SON'S REBELLION, MURDERS, AND EXCOMMUNICATION, HE SWOONS, IS PARALYSED, AND AT THE LAST DIES

THERE hath come to my hands, whilst ordering papers and parchments for the Family, in unofficial assistance of Charles, who had to depart for Rome on brief notice, as aforementioned, certain works in record-keeping, bearing the following endorsement:—

"Here follow divers Chronicles, written at the instance of the Noble and Magnanimous Lord Gerald FitzGerald, 9th Earl of Kildare (and Lord-Deputy of Ireland); by Philip Flattisbury, of Johnstown, near Naas—A.D. 1517, in the ninth year of Henry the VIIIth."

(I go not into them very deeply; but as the death of my Lord's first wife occurs as last of the entries, I opine that the abrupt close of the records was explained thereby. Of this mine own poor writing knoweth his Lordship naught.)

Meanwhile, how fared it with his Lordship?

It hath already been said how, upon being for the fourth time ordered to England, my Lord had hesitated as never

before, had awaited receipt of the King's very paper in his very hand; and had sent his lady-wife over to beseech that the order might be quashed.

The cunning enemies of the Earl had this time only named his distress of inconsiderable persons for form's sake. Their real charges against him were of such nature as to offend the King personally, and they succeeded.

Then, when he came to reply, his hurt, taken at Birr Castle, had removed the grace and power from his aspect, the smoothness and eloquence from his speech. They who harkened, remembering the former man, deemed the present condemned out of the very lagging of his lips. He was declared guilty, and consigned to the Tower. There remained with him his beloved Countess and his faithful servant, Robert Reilly.

With a sudden increment of his bodily weakness and mental despondency, came an eager longing for the consolements of religion.

In conversation with the priest who attended upon prisoners, the Earl dwelt much upon the fate of his former foe, Wolsey, and on the sad words with which he had, to Thomas Cromwell, bade farewell to office, and humbly wished he had given more duty to God, even if no less to His Majesty!

"Yes, father," quoth he, "this poor Earl of Kildare had never (if the sinful creature of God may say so!) so much put right-doing before him as of late days! But our Liege Master seemeth to me to have taken unto himself a new hardness—again, if I may say so of my Sovereign—and much more assertion of his own mind, since last I was

brought before him. I do not seem to know the King, or mayhap I did not know him aright formerly!

"Yet, methinks, I do prefer his royal sternness to the plover-catching of the gentle Robertus Cowley, who sheddeth tears like the softest crocodile, because of my long durance by himself procured!"

"How 'a plover-catcher,' my son?" saith the priest.

"Why, father, the snarer setteth his sprynges, and then seizeth his birds. The frost bringeth water to his eyes; but his thumb doth express the brains of the death-shuddering birds for all his tears!"

In every shape he sought opportunity to make submission to the King's authority and his decrees; and that not only in his own personal regard, but for the part of his son, Lord Thomas, whom he had left for his representation as Deputy in Ireland.

His greatest comforts in life were these—his most devoted, his most loving, his right entirely noble wife was his constant companion in the prison.

It hath often had occasion to be prayed by many injured persons, "Oh, Lord! grant unto us good salvation from the kind hands of our friends!"

Certes, that petition might our noble Countess of Kildare have sent up, seeing how her own brother, Lord Leonard Grey, hath fouled and soiled her name unworthily by his letter that I have mine own self seen addressed, as is with her endorsing, to the Secretary of State, and over date 18th June, 1533. With the air of believing that his sister, born and baptized Lady Elizabeth Grey, had already written to Thomas Cromwell to be her attorney in the business,

he taketh up her petition, as it were, that secretly, without knowledge of her husband, the Earl, the Manors of Rathwear, Kilkea, and others, may be held for her and her son, Gerald. She asketh to have the matter privily laboured, because she doth opine that her husband would be more gladder to get these Manors secured to Lord Offaly than to his son begotten by her. But I know from Robert Reilly, and otherwhence, that her daily song and parable is that her dear cousin, the King, had kind thoughts ever behind a countenance of official frowning—marking for himself the doings, so brave and dutiful, of Lord Thomas, by her ever dubbed, "Our dear-beloved son Offaly."

And it was this thought of the Countess, so piously made for the cheer of her poor, failing husband, upon which Thomas Cannon had laid hold to deceive De la Hoyde, for the ruin of the said Lord Offaly, as shall be seen hereinafter.

Roused from lethargy and despond by this tenderness and this hope, Lord Kildare, in exercise taken several times daily whiles leaning upon his dear Lady Elizabeth's arm, retarded that evil day when the maims received at Birr took off all powers from brain and limbs.

The cutting of sailing communication by bad tempests did truly account for the long misunderstanding of the Silken Thomas as touching his father's death. It also came as consolation from Lady Elizabeth's lips when Lord Kildare begged news of his son.

"None at all news, my dearest Lord," she would say, most tenderly, "is all good news!"

Alas! her loving kindness to spare her husband anxiety

made the shock of the desperate tidings all the heavier when they did come.

From that tender legend of a young governor's being benignly watched as to his bearing by his King, in the wish to advance him; from all the wife's cheer of "their dear son" doing them honour in their old age by his pious and loyal ability in the conduct of affairs; from cheering promises of a return to their dear land, when Archbishop Alen would be reconciled to them, and give them his support in office and his consolation in religion—from all this brightness, I say, of promise and hope, made around him by the ceaseless love of his fond spouse, to what had not the poor Earl to turn?

Not even to a due explanation of his miserable son's unhappy course, or one word of the false letter declaring his (to wit, the Earl's) death, which the son had received! But straight to a crude, sudden, unbroken, untempered report of all:

"His son had lost his head in his new dignity; had been so puffed up by his being let to represent the King that he had deemed himself fitted to displace him; had slaughtered eighty innocent citizens in cold blood, after seeking league with the King's enemies all the world over; had (like a caitiff and coward savage, without fear of the Great God) murdered the aged Archbishop; and (for testimony of which now see the very paper in the hand of the Lieutenant of the Tower) had been cursed, damned, and excommunicated, in body and soul, in present and in the future state, in name and fame, in blood, bone, and marrow, everlasting.—Amen!"

I have held the paper in my very hands.

It was beyond any human bearing! It was reported with all sad accompaniments of the anger of Heaven by an earthquake four days before the Archbishop's murder! It came, with its disaster in spiritual matters, just when the anxious father was most attuning himself to the making of his soul. It meant the ruin of the family. It crushed the hope that even Gerald, son of this dear wife now lying prostrate, would be allowed to carry on the race in name, title, or property. It was the end of all things in this earthly world, and it was sheer damnation for that which is to come!

At knowing of all of which together, the Earl swooned quite away; and when returned to his wits, had never more the uses of his limbs!

Since the sacrilegious murder occurred upon the 28th July, and the awful edict of excommunication was its first way of reaching my sad Lord and his wife; and since, finally, the Earl of Kildare died on the 12th December, 1534, it is surely for fair record here that the same had his death of a broken heart.

And, quite worn out with nursing him—or, exhausted by the strain of being strength for him when she herself had no strength, no hope—the sad lady survived him but a little while. Which (as her own boy, Gerald, afterwards head of the noble House of KILDARE, still survived to be the better of her influence and care) is the best answer to the slanders of her brother, Lord Leonard Grey—to wit, that all her wishes were for her own offspring's aggrandisement only.

They buried the poor, sad Earl's body in the Chapel of St. Peter, in that Tower of London which holdeth at rest the hearts of many wearied. Some have sinned, and some were sinned against; but none had known more heights of triumph, and more depths of downfall, or more changes of love and sorrow, than this Gerald, ninth Earl of Kildare. —*R.I.P.*

Upon his coffin men put these words:

"Here Lieth the Corpse of the L. GERALD FITZGERALD, Earl of KILDARE, who deceased the 12th December, in the Year of Our Lord MCCCCCXXXIIII., on whose Soul, JESU have Mercy!"

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH

GIVETH THE HISTORY OF THE SILKEN THOMAS—HIS FOOLISH ESSAY TO TAKE DUBLIN AND ITS CASTLE—HIS DEFEAT —AND HIS APPEAL FOR INTERCESSION WITH THE KING

METHINKS that if Lady Offaly had abided with her husband until the murder of the Archbishop, she had then had more reasonable and lawful occasion for declining concourse marital with one whose hands were so blood-stained as his.

Yet, again, had she so abode, it is probable that such miserable events had never occurred!

All throughout this most melancholic time, nothing hath more struck upon me than how the query of fact (*id est* "Whether the Lord Earl had been done to death or not?") had got pushed on one side.

Now, had he who hath well been dubbed "Headlong Hotspur" had with him a loving wife, she having even half the quick wit of the Lady Offaly, it is sure she would have reasoned not at all, but gone straight to the question: "Hast thou had proof that the letter is true in its substance and purport?"

And more, her so querying would probably have been in time!

Which matter of time hath close bearing upon Lord

Thomas's action. The day came when it mattered not whether his father survived or nay, for he had by then so committed himself that to point out the falseness of the rumour upon which he had gone wild could be of none effect.

But, all hope of pardon once over by the Archbishop's murder, Lord Thomas essayed boldness.

The first step thereafter was the riding to Howth, and taking prisoner Lord Howth.

Next was seized the Lord Chief Justice — by name, Luttrell.

And, again, the citizens and Lord Mayor, not having had such assurance of instant help as would justify their resistance in the depeopled state of the town, Lord Thomas was allowed to besiege the Castle. All the pipes of oak wood, and all the stone conduits supplying the fortress were cut; and the season was dry.

With six hundred men detached for the crazy enterprise were two or three small cannons called Falcons.

The attacking companies first well enfenced themselves, and then rudely seized many children of the citizens, placed them above the defences, so that if the Castle guns were trained upon them, the infants would assuredly be slain!

But although it was at this point that Lord Thomas had his triumph over the Butlers, Alderman Herbert's answer from the King began the downfall of the enterprise.

Instant support in their loyal position being promised, the citizens at last took courage to shut their gates in the face of the enemy. Many swam the river, but a large tale of them were secured.

Lord Thomas complained, and again seized children of the citizens. He tore down the ends of the thatched houses running along Thomas Street, so making a sheltered alley on the ridge overlooking the valley of the Castle for his men.

Nevertheless, many of his following were wounded; and so his people tried to burn the Castle gates for revenge.

Now, mark what happened.

Lord Thomas had enforced all his men; and they had no heart in his quarrel.

"Why are we taken from our homes, and made rebels of, except it be that the Earl has been unjustly murthered?" they muttered amongst themselves. "And of that there is no proof to go against what we hear to the contrary. And if this 'Silken Thomas' cannot guaranty our heads on our shoulders from the anger of a King of this world, how far less can he make our peace with all we may offend in another, he being himself out of all contact of Salvation by reason of the Holy Father's awful banning?"

As those in the Castle soon found arrows having no heads being shot in, they saw that the attack was heartless. They sent abroad the word that help was by the doorstep; and four hundred men of the garrison darting forth without warning, surprised and dispersed the Silken Thomas's army, killing four score, and taking his big guns. It was with the help of the smoke and the flame in the burning of the gates by his own people that the sally which destroyed him was able to be carried out; and an hundred were quickly slain.

From that time, all was downhill with the Silken Thomas!

Flying from before the Castle, he took refuge at the Grey Friar Monastery, in the street of St. Francis, and slept there that night. Next morning he stole away to his army of unarmed men, with the news in his ear that the fleet was surely coming.

Murtagh, having at last come into touch with Lord Thomas, begged him to submit without sinking himself deeper in the mire; and for a beginning, and for parleying time, advised him to treat with the chiefs of the city, asking them to release his people, and that they should intercede for him with the King.

But the Silken Thomas, who had purposely avoided Murtagh all this time, whilst acting partly upon his counsel, spoiled the matter by adding that the citizens should give him £800 or £1,000 in money, and £500 in wares; and furnish him with artillery and the stores necessary for war, all such requests being most foolish!

The Recorder agreed alone to the terms which Murtagh had proposed. The prisoners would be exchanged for the children; and the citizens would address a favourable letter to His Majesty, praying for the gracious pardon of the captain and his confederates.

But as regards the conditions so foolishly added by Lord Thomas, they advertised him that, made into poor men by his wars, they would give him neither money nor wares.

They also wondered he could let himself be caught in such contradictions! If he did not mean to continue his

treason, but was minded to seek their good offices with the King for a pardon, what need had he, forsooth, of arms and munition? But if he desired to plague them by prolonging his rebellions, they were no fools to give him rods to harry their own backs withal!

"Had Lord Thomas asked for good parchment vellum, whereupon to engross his pleadings for pardon, they had understood it better. They would give him all the intercessions they could by word or letter; but no artillery wherewith to outstand the King's officers."

Lord Thomas got what Murtagh had advised his asking—no more, and nothing less. And then he and Murtagh paid a hurried visit to the Castle at Maynooth, where orders were made for the fortification and victualling of which there would be need if a siege had to be endured. Hearing that the English troops, or some of them, were about landing, he hurried back to his two hundred poorly-armed followers, and gave battle to eighty well-armed men under two captains, named Hamerton, one of whom slightly wounded Lord Thomas in the forehead. Here, to the Silken Thomas's great grief, was killed a Musgrave, a kinsman; and here, too, did his small artillery fire so fast on the ships that they fled to Skerries.

But Sir William Skeffington and Sir William Brereton landed at another point without opposition, and got much welcome in Dublin.

Nevertheless, many things prevented the crushing of the Silken Thomas's rebellion.

Sir William Skeffington was ill, the winter was near, and beyond a march to Drogheda, where Skeffington's army

stayed for a week, nothing was done for many long and anxious months.

At last Sir William Brereton took up more of the control of affairs.

Marching against the Castle here, he had a meeting with Lord Thomas's party, and won a bloody victory over him, so that there was a bitter keening amongst families in Maynooth, on my right hand and upon my left. Yet am I fain to say that no undue violence was done, nor any ravaging or ravishing, or arson; so that we had no fear or trouble, except in sorrow for others, and mine own helplessness to aid anyone, gentle or simple.

Among the injured was my Moina's father; so as she of needs devoted herself to him, I saw the less of my dearest heart, for which disadvantage my good Aunt Vimbela made what compensation she could, not only doubling her own care of me, but by moving Murtagh, for my good as well as his own, to abide still more at rest with me.

"When the boar will to the mire, dear Murtagh," she said, "the cat cannot purge him by fouling her dainty paws. We have it from thine own lips that there lieth a destiny before Lord Thomas. If thou canst turn aside from him what is evil in that same weird by the deaths of me, of Martyn, and thyself, arise now and slay us, and our blood be upon our own heads! But if thou canst work no good even by a great sacrifice, then waste thyself no more in a pitchforking of the tide backwards. If all I hear be true, thou hast had no welcome for thine advice from Lord Thomas. Let him be!"

I have known no one move Murtagh so much as my

gentle Aunt Vimbela. He sighed deeply, and passed to his room; but thereafter much gave over his wanderings.

When Murtagh had come down from his garret, a new look was in his face.

"The English are moving against the Castle," said he. "I see the banner of the King, and that of Sir William Brereton, at the head of many thousands! We have had blood and death; now we must feel the shame and pain of treachery!"

And so he strode out!

That day died Moina's father, after rehearsing many kind words for me.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH

WHICH TELLETH OF THE BETRAYAL OF THE CASTLE OF THE GERALDINES BY CHRISTOPHER PARESE, AFTER A BRIEF WORD ANENT THE AFFAIRS OF THE SCRIVENER

Not in anywise violent in the village, as I am bound to confess, the trained men of the great army which thus set down before the Castle for its beleaguerment were especially courteous to the small house overlooking the market-place, where I passed the long days and nights. I mourned that I was helpless in such troublous times; but, an I may confess it, I was sore wrought in mine own mind against the foolishness of Lord Thomas, which by now was plainly advertised as having none excuse in any such matter as a murder, an execution, or a death in any wise, of his father.

Not to thrust mine own affairs into the midst of great matters, I may say that, barring some bone-displacement in my back, which with half an egg-shell I could cover, I have little to cry out about. Full senses have come back to my legs. Murtagh hath chiselled out curious hand-stones, like hour-glasses, which I have learned to whirl around and about my head, with much keenness of appetite brought thereby. My work of scrivenery, too, goeth on.

Mo'na's widowed mother, at our solicitation, hath come

to dwell with us; for the house hath four living rooms and a great cooking-hearth.

But, ah, the sadness of it as we lay, or sat, and heard the booming of the cannon!

For it was now the 14th of March, in the year of Christ's Salvation, 1535; and Sir William Brereton, under the ailing Deputy, Skeffington, having first offered liberty unto all, or any, to depart out of the Castle, with bag and baggage, pardon and reward, hath now attacked our Castle from the north, from Crowhill.

Lord Thomas had followed his father in armamenting and supplying the Castle, which was, indeed, full of all stores, and deemed to be impregnable.

Therefore when the Herald, after a fanfare, read aloud a copy of the offer, and laid it under a white flag on the roadway, many voices scoffed, and men cried aloud that the offer was of Sir William Brereton's gentleness rather than of any deserving of theirs. They besought him to make the kind offer every day for a year, and, with much gravity, said he should carefully keep his head warm!

So, when the time named in the offer was over-passed, the battering went on for a fortnight. A dreary and disturbed time for us.

Now be it well understood that Lord Thomas was not in the Castle its defence; but away working further mischief for his enemies in Kilkenny, and drawing to his standard of the red saltire many to whom he gave promise of booty, a share of control, a livery, and the weapons of war; and the best feeding after forays.

Be it also remembered how Christopher Parese

was foster-brother to Lord Thomas, had joined Patrick Cannon in challenging Murtagh upon his prophesyings, upon the day when our ears tingled to the false story of the Earl's murder by the King. "Whoever deserted the house of Kildare, yet would not he, at whose mother's breast the infant Lord Thomas had been nurtured."

With similar words had this Parese won his noble foster-brother's confidence, so that when he had to nominate one in charge to defend the Castle, who but Parese was he?

The battering proceeded; and on occasion the confident defenders jeered (as afore-mentioned) those who made the assault. And, certes, it was indeed most probable that the great walls would have withstood all that artillery could do against them; while the food was ample, and the water from a well of great depth and plenteousness.

But unto Christopher Parese the commending of conscience for trust well discharged, for duty well done, came to seem as nothing in comparison of gold. And so, about the fourteenth day of the beleaguerment, he shot an arrow into the camp of the besiegers. Round the shaft was a letter, in which he voluntarily proposed to take a sum in gold down, and a provision for his life, as his reward for betraying the impregnable Castle of Maynooth. He would understand that Sir William Skeffington agreed to his terms, if, at a certain hour, two guns were fired together, and a man waved a flag so many times.

The hour arrived.

The two guns boomed off; but beyond the hitting of the walls, no one questioned had anything happened out of ordinary.

And although a man in the besieging camp was seen waving a yellow flag, it meant nought to any eyes in the Castle but those which were in expectation of it—and which even the fair daylight should have blasted, if poets' justice happed upon evil-doers whenever they deserved it.

The evening of that shameful day came.

It was Thursday in Passion Week, 23rd of March, 1535.

Christopher Parese drugged the beer of the men who had watch and ward in the first and second gate-rooms; so they not only slept, but very near died.

At the gloaming of the dawn, Parese made signs to the investing army, and a select body under Sir William Brereton moved silently into the doomed fortress. The first man in was Holland; and he, in full armour, fell head-long into a tun of feathers.

At that instant, Sir William Brereton, being well within the fortress, shouted, "St. George, St. George for Merrie England!" and the guards awoke from their poisoned sleep, to find the passages crowded with armed men, all enemies. One of these, now bitterly wide awake, seeing Holland struggling to rid himself of the feathers, fired an arrow at him, which missed; whereupon Holland, being assisted, shot his foe through the head.

There was some resistance. Some yielded, some were slain. But with his own hand, Sir William ran up his own standard upon the highest tower; and the Deputy entered at noon.

The booty was extraordinarily great and rich, for until a few days before the fortress must be closed for the attack, Lord Thomas had poured in the best of all his movable property—to make no mention of all the chattels sent in of late years by the Earl.

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH

RECOUNTING THE TREACHEROUS PUNISHMENT OF CHRISTOPHER PARESE'S TREACHERY, AND THE QUAINT PART PLAYED BY ONE BOYCE

When Sir William strode into the very heart of the Castle, two choirmen, one of the De la Hoydes, and Hayward, sang a song called "*Dulcis Amica*" so sweetly, as even to touch the Lord Deputy's heart. By consequence they were forgiven—a Chief Justice consenting.

But seeing Sir William Skeffington bearing a most gladsome countenance, and greedy now for the reward of his three-accursed treachery, the wretched Parese, gaily smiling, came forward and made his courtesy to Sir William.

Looking long at him in silence, the Deputy, having found him a plastic creature in strong hands, and being resolved to have nothing further to do with such services, thus queried of him, in order that he might be condemned out of his own mouth:

"Christopher Parese, I have it in command to thank thee upon the behalf of the King's majesty for his service, preferred and carried through by thee. I acknowledge that by the same have been saved much charges and many valiant lives of His Highness's soldiers.

"When the King shall be advertised thereof, I take upon

me to say that he would not see thee lack during the remaining term of thy life.

"Now, therefore, so as I may be the wiser instructed how to repay thee whiles I have authority, I crave to learn what emoluments, boons, honours, trusts, and advantages thy late master hath been in custom to accord to thee for thy services?"

Now, Parese felt assured from these addresses that at the least he would obtain knightage, as, for less serious services, did Sir Frances Herbert, as well as good provision in annual payment for his lifetime. But he opined also that by the amount of his benefits in the service of the Geraldines would be gauged the rewards of the King.

Therefore, besides all pay and allowances, he set forth the particulars of all loving acts, all kindnesses, all trusts, all comforts and honours done him by the Earl of Kildare, and by his own noble foster-brother, Lord Thomas, who had placed the defence of the Castle in his hands, showing a loving confidence to that very hour!

When he could lay tongue upon none other goodness of his late masters, and so, with smiles, became expectantly silent—this had he from Sir William Skeffington:

"Why, Parese, assuredly thou must be a-romancing! What! after all these goodnesses, all these confidences, all these love and gentlesse, canst thou have truly put thyself to all such loss of body, all such strain of heart and estate, to serve the King? Is all this thine account, true in spirit and true in detail, or am I to take it as varnished for a purpose, or eat it with a grain of salt?"

"All I have said, your Excellency," said Parese, very

joyfully smiling, "was a true account of my case as in service of the Earls of Kildare and the Lords of the Manor and Castle of Maynooth!"

"Sirrah!" shouted Sir William Skeffington, "couldest thou find it in thy stomach—I say not heart, for heart thou hast none such thing—to betray his Castle who hath been thy foster-brother first, and in these very latest days a master, lord, and friend, after so sweet and generous a fashion? Verily, one who hath been so hollow to him will never be solid in the truth to serve the King's majesty, or us the King's servants!

"Is this thy paper, sent on the arrow-bolt yesterday, and replied to by our signal as arranged?"

Pale and trembling, Parese bent forward to look at the paper.

In it he had stipulated for £1,000 in gold, and to be furnished so as never to lack provision for his life.

After such high hope of knighthood, and I know not what all, as Sir William Skeffington's first words made him foster, to merely receive the letter of his bond was a bad coming back.

Nevertheless, he smelled danger in the last scornful address; so he murmured that he would expect no more than he had termed for in that writing.

Sir William turned, as it were, to arrange the life provision, but it was only to give this commandment:

"Deliver now to this false hound that sum of gold which I have promised him to be delivered upon the surrender of the Castle."

Four men in readiness produced bags of gold, each con-

taining two hundred and fifty pounds. These they laid at Parese's feet, who very miserly laid arms around the same, and prepared to secure them to his uses.

But then Sir William cried aloud:

"I further covenanted with thee that, by provision to be made thee on the King's behalf, thou shouldst never lack for the remainder of thy life. At this moment thou lackest not assuredly, having thy thousand pounds unspent in hand. And for the future thou shalt be as little in want. Strike off his head!"

This last was to the great sword-bearing soldier whom the knight had in readiness as executioner.

Trembling and blubbering, Parese shrieked out:

"Alas, sir, your Lordship had not won this fortress so bloodlessly had I known how strictly thou thirstedst for blood of mine!"

"*Ainthragh!*" roared out one Boyce, the loyal, loving friend of all the Earls of Kildare—the word in the Irish tongue signifying "Too late!"

Plainly, to have uttered it put a danger upon the worthy head of Boyce; for it showed a rage at Parese's betrayal of the Castle of those who were Boyce's good friends.

"What said he?" called the Deputy of those who stood about.

But Boyce became his own lawyer and interpreter on the instant.

"My Lord Deputy," quoth he, saluting, "before that Christopher Parese shall be executed, I beg your Lordship to have advertisement that he is at this day seized and possessed of the revenues of a village yclept Anteragh,

which are worth a thousand pounds, but of which I have never a penny received of him. I ask, then, what disposal he wills to—"

"Man!" shouted Sir William to the executioner, "do thine office on the instant!"

As the traitor's head rolled off, the Deputy cried out:

"Now, hand over that Judas money to this gentleman!"

Boyce, without further words, laid the sacks of gold across the shoulders of as many men of the garrison, and, saluting, passed away, unmolested and enriched! Whose wit had saved his head; whose loyal anger for the Geraldines had made a lapse in the prudence of his wit that had well-nigh cost him his life; and who benefited by a rash, splenetic word of loyalty, to the measure of all that Parese had forgotten all his loyalty for.

All of which hath embodiment in the word which nearly led to his undoing; and when in Ireland a man will scoff at the failure of a treacherous person, he will call out "Ainthragh!" or, where the legend runneth with the speaking of English, the phrase is, "Too late, says Boyce!"

Sir William Skeffington, having hanged twenty-five of the defenders, left a garrison in the Castle, returned in great fettle to Dublin, and left Sir William Brereton to defend the city, whiles he marched with the army to Naas.

Albeit, the bodily health of Sir William Skeffington was not too good, but he paled and wasted, and waxed feebler daily. So that at last it became a great labour even shakingly to sign his name to his reports to the King, as I have myself seen.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST

WHICH INQUIRETH WHETHER OR NO MURTAGH HAD REASON FOR HIS THOUGHTS OF FINDING THE LETTER WHICH DECEIVED LORD THOMAS; AND SETTETH HIM FORTH UPON THE QUEST THEREFOR, MARTYN AGREEING

DURING many of the days before these events, Murtagh had given himself over into moods of long and silent meditation; and bearing in mind how much more of action than of very quiet thinking I had ever seen in my friend, I felt oft-times disposed to enrouse him by questions, or to move him to occupations.

I noted that, contrariwise, all in the house, if guided by my dear Aunt Vimbela, left him to himself, and procured all of peace and silence for him that might be.

At last [but this was three days before the betrayal of the Castle, and whiles (because of its importance) Lord Thomas might still have hope of some consideration if moved to a sufficient humility]—at last, I say, I saw Murtagh preparing for a journey. And he seemed as one who desired to be searched as regards his goings and his doings, or purposings.

"Murtagh," said I, "hast thou weighed mine aunt's parable? Art thou minded to soil thy paws to no purpose,

as a cat might be analogied to do, which would hope to purge the vast hide of a thrice-wallowing boar by her delicate pawings? In a plainer word, can any good accrue to Lord Thomas because of any desire of thine to throw thine own head after his?"

"Alas, Martyn," said Murtagh, very sadly, "I have had, whether I will it or nay, to go into harness of conviction with Vimbela. But it is borne in on me that there is connection betwixt the meeting of Lady Offaly with a gallant in the oak coppice and the false rumour of the Earl's death, which hath set Lord Thomas off upon his foolish and deadly quest!"

"Ay, Murtagh, and thy success in challenging Patrick Cannon with the two names of the man pointed to some intrigue with the brother Thomas who is gifted in scrivenery."

Murtagh sprang to his feet.

"What, Martyn, seest thou the chain too?"

"I have seen it from the first," said I. "My first and only puzzlement hath been, what useful issue can we expect from any study of such intrigue?"

"The puzzle having answered itself in my poor mind this day, it is which taketh me to Dublin."

"How, Murtagh?"

"When the letter was put in Lord Thomas's hand, he read it, and passed it to O'Connor, who presently gave it to O'Niall; since which it hath been seen no more.

"Now, word hath been received, answering reproaches, from De la Hoyde; and he protesteth that he signed no

paper purporting that the Earl had been beheaded, and no short letter of any kind.

"There was, he saith, an anonymous epistle of four pages' length, which, by desire, he read and endorsed. And this very gladly, since it set forth that His Majesty would once more have returned the Earl in all authority to Ireland, but for a benign intent to see how Lord Thomas would bear himself in that high post, in which his father had with some bravery placed him. The only reference to any death in the letter which De la Hoyde signed was where it said that the King would thereto have entreated Lord Kildare's enemies!"

"Would God, then, that the short letter which maddened Lord Thomas had been examined and preserved!" cried I.

"I go to see whether it may have been," said Murtagh, arising.

"On some news of its keeping, Murtagh?"

"None."

"Then upon what hope?" said I.

I know Murtagh so well that I saw he wished me to pursue the questioning. I should equally have understood had he desired that we should silently await issues.

"On that day of St. Barnabas," said Murtagh, bending his head down on his folden arms—his way when he thinketh deep—"upon that day when the letter was handed to Lord Thomas, he and the friends who rode beside him were the centres of many eyes. It remembers me that the day was fine and breezy—the letter was lost not far from the top of Ship Street, at entering the street of St. Thomas.

"Not many folden letters are dropped in our streets. The gay troopers no sooner passed than some of the crowd turned to follow after. A white letter on a sound road would catch the eye. It may have got to the hands of an enemy. He would secrete it. It may have come to the possession of a friend. He would have returned it to Lord Thomas. Lastly—and on this is my faint hope of usefulness founded—it may have been taken up by one who could not read, and put aside for a reference and forgotten. But of one thing I am assured—there is some misunderstanding, or some false making of De la Hoyde's name. I shall see what may be done."

"Murtagh," said I, "suppose the letter was a blameable or a false one, do you still think Lord Thomas would humble himself to offer the same in excuse for his faults—his murder of the Archbishop, to wit?"

"At least, some inducement to do so would be stronger than any other I can think of. I never think of what we both witnessed in the oak coppice, when thou wast a ghost, and little Jacob played the Banshee of the Geraldines, without putting what there occurred together with the fact that Lord Thomas was driven witless by a false letter."

"There *was* treachery, Murtagh," said my Aunt Vimbela, in a sharp tone unusual to her.

With one hand she gave him a packet of cakes—having dried meat and butter laid therein—and a horn of beer. With the other she handed him his staff, to the top of which she had suspended his wooden sandals.

He took them, and whiles he shook my hand, she oped the door. As he passed out, she gave him a sign of

blessing; and in an instant after his bending to receive it, he was gone.

All this, it must not be forgot, fell out three days before Parese's treachery.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND

THE IMITATIONS OF JACOB RANSTRAW HINT OF THE DEVISINGS OF MURTAGH FOR THE BENEFIT OF MARTYN'S MAIM

It was at such times of absence that my good aunt took chance to ready Murtagh's room. She placed my horn of milk at my side, and passed by the ladder to the room which Murtagh shared with the tiny dwarf.

Now, little Jacob ever sought to copy Murtagh. And my aunt had told me that amongst Murtagh's strange ways, all of which in end proved to have had sense and meaning and explanation, was his bringing home the bones of animals with which he made some kind of study.

And Aunt Vimbela told me that upon this occasion, when she entered the room, little Jacob only looked up with the sweet smile which made his wee, weazened face beautiful because of the love he had for Vimbela, and bent himself down over Murtagh's table.

Thereupon had often lain many rough bones of horse, dog, or ox; but now Jacob had for toys many of a new sort, which ran up and down upon a curved iron rod. Vimbela looked, and lo! Jacob got them into an order, so that one matched fittingly into another, like rough and irregular beads upon a giant's bracelet, only laid along the iron rod.

Then Jacob stood up, folded his arms, frowned, and bent down his head while gazing at the quaint playthings. He was most plainly imitating Murtagh!

Suddenly the tiny being selected one of the biggest of the bones, and laid it out of line with its fellows. A long pause followed, and then the dwarf, laying all the bones hard together along the rod, pressed the displaced one. It slipped to its place with a snap, and the line of bones was again even.

Jacob sprang to his feet, looked smilingly up to heaven, and taking his little cloak from its place, made as one who would go a journey.

"He was plainly playing at being Murtagh. Martyn, what can it all mean?" said my Aunt Vimbela.

"I know not, dear aunt," said I; "I am following Murtagh with all my heart on his patient quest to great Eblana."

"Murtagh's acts are never idle," said my aunt quietly, passing on to her duties of the house.

But the scene she had described dwelt upon me. Was Murtagh seeking to understand my pain?

An hour later Moina entered, Vimbela being gone a-marketing.

"Sweetheart," said I, when our greeting was made, and telling her what Aunt Vimbela had seen, I begged her to "go to Murtagh's room and bring me the giant's necklace of rough bones."

Moina was longer than I had thought she would be. She had had to search diligently for anything answering to what my aunt had described, and succeeded in finding a

string of knuckle-bones of oxen, square and rough, lightly running on an iron wire. I had seen such taken from ancient tombs, and had heard that of olden times gambling games had been played therewith. I smiled at Murtagh's keeping such toys, doubtless and plainly for the amusing of his little charge, Jacob, and there an end. Moina restored them to the corner where they had hung. Vimbela never knew of my curiosity.

The next morn passed, and all day long, at uneven spaces of time, the cannons boomed out sullenly; and sometimes a mounted man galloped through the town, to or from Dublin.

Sometimes a foraying party passed through for meat and provender, or having the same in hand. We longed for our friend to be with us.

The third day Murtagh returned.

I believe he had never slept in the meantime, and he well-nigh sank beside his platter from fatigue. But there was that in his face which I knew meant triumph.

He knew beforehand that Vimbela would not let him speak until he had eaten, and so he waited.

I had never seen him eat so heartily. I thought of the Abbot of Reading.

When at last he was content, he reclined upon a bench and said:

"Dear Vimbela, and Moina, and Martyn, ever remember this day!"

Alas! we had sore reason to remember it, but Murtagh's story was indeed wonderful.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD

GIVETH ITS ACCOUNT OF MURTAGH'S FINDING OF THE FATEFUL LETTER, THE ISSUES OF WHICH MAY NOT BE UNEDGED BY FORESTALMENTS HERE

ARRIVED at Dublin, he had passed at once along St. Thomas's Street, at the point looking down Ship Street, to the great tower of the Castle.

The sides and ends of the cottages had been removed in many cases; but those forming Ship Street, being in the valley of fields below the ridge, had not been destroyed.

Murtagh knew the man who kept the horse-shoeing forge, and he spoke to him at the door.

The troublous times had not treated him too badly. Many horses of soldiers, and of rapidly-travelling citizens, had had to be shod.

He remembered the day when Lord Thomas, riding with his cavalcade to exercise in the fields about St. Patrick's great church, had passed up the hill.

Yes! the day was a fine one. The roads were good.

No; he had not heard of anything being picked up after the passsage of the cavalcade. He had not seen any letter handed to Lord Thomas FitzGerald. Sooth to say, a horse about the middle of the troop had cast a shoe; but the rider had at once jumped down, recovered the shoe, and

turned aside to the forge to have it put on. Let Murtagh ask old Hanlon, the scavenger.

"A good thought!" Murtagh said; "but I know not the house."

"Colleen!" said the smith to a small girl just then passing, "I have an apple for thee if thou wilt show the house of thine uncle to this friend of mine."

Murtagh joined the child; and they came to the entrance of an alley which ended at green grass of the country.

Here was Hanlon's cabin. He was from home his wife said, at work. Since these Rapparee days, when people pull whole streets down, there had been much heavy work, putting away the litter from the torn thatches. Could the Messer leave any message for Hanlon?

Murtagh hesitated.

The quest upon which he was bent was a serious one to him, and had bearings upon the lives and affairs of the highest in the land.

But to ask a woman to tell her husband that a man had come to inquire for a letter dropped in a troop of mounted soldiers, upon the Feast of St. Barnabas, or, say the 11th of June, he speaking then upon the 27th of March following, did seem so foolish that Murtagh was passing on, saying he would see Hanlon later.

Seeing him give pause, the woman offered him encouragement.

"If you have lost something, good sir," she said, "let no hopelessness of seeming prevent you leaving word for my husband. Such wonders of findings have happed to him

that none need despair of coin or jewel until he hath leave from Hanlon to do so!"

Then Murtagh told that it was only a letter, and that he had never seen it; that it was nine months ago since it had been dropped; and that he had little doubt it had blown away, or been over-trodden. On his chance, however, he had come. If Hanlon thought any good of routing out papers and fragments picked up in his scavenging, he would pay for his trouble of search for a letter. It would be known by bearing the name of De la Hoyde, at least.

Here some children of the alley came along and listened.

Murtagh loved children.

"What a fair son this is, who clingeth to thy skirts," said Murtagh, when the wife of the scavenger had repeated the message aloud, for sureness.

"It is my sister's little boy," said the woman, as the child ran away to the house at the end of the alley. "He hath resolved to be a scavenger like his Uncle Mark. And truly he hath eyes and ears for all that passeth! What wonder hath he now?"

"Mother is out, Aunty," said the child, in a low whisper, "and I cannot ask her. And you cannot read," continued the urchin, "so ask the man would his letter look like this?"

So saying, he handed a folded letter to the woman, who said:

"Yes, so be it: say is the lost letter like this one; and so shall my good man know for what-like thing he hath to make his search."

Murtagh took the document.

A horse-shoe had stamped upon the paper, but little to its injury. As he opened it, the first thing he noticed was De la Hoyde's signature.

Folding it very calmly, he placed it in a pocket from which he drew a crown, and some brass money.

"I have never read the letter," said he; "but it will surely be of some likeness to this one. Therefore, I give thee this crown for thy trouble in message-bearing, and these pennies to thy clever weeny nephew. Let Hanlon search, and bring me any such letter as this that he may have found; and if I take one, as I take this, why, I shall likewise pay him for his trouble. How camest thou by this paper, avick?" said he, placing a hand upon the child's head.

"I found it up there," said the urchin, "one day when the sojers passed by, and I wept for not seeing them. I would show it to father; but I put it on the shelf, and forgot it. I am very glad," continued the child, "for I never had so much money before; and I will look for letters for the Messer every day!"

Gleefully clasping his few pence, he sped away; and the woman, looking with almost as much pleasure at her crown, made her courtesy; and Murtagh turned aside.

Gaining the fields at the Monastery of St. Francis, he at last drew forth the letter, and read that to which Lord Thomas owed his ex-communication and his position of unjustified rebel. It is the same that I have given fully in these records.

Read as it opened, no words could more plainly mean that, after form of trial, Lord Thomas's father had been all

suddenly haled forth, and hanged, drawn, beheaded, and sundered in quarters, in the barbarous and grotesque fashion done upon traitors!

Murtagh read it twice through.

It was written by some person who desired to remain unknown; but, strange to say, it was plainly endorsed and signed by James De la Hoyde, as by one who verified the history, and who approved and endorsed the counsel given within!

Murtagh, greatly bewildered, folded the epistle, and replacing it in his pocket, passed into the Monastery of St. Francis, where he knew the lay-brother in charge chirurgical of the Infirmary.

There be many homely simples in the country, alike known to the Apothecary and Murtagh. But there was much that was not understood of Murtagh in the making up of the human body. Of all his studies therein at this time I only knew, with a grateful heart, nigh upon twenty months after!

"I understand, good Theobald," said Murtagh, "when I see the bones of a dead horse, how its back was strong, yet gave somewhat with its load.

"But tell me this: a man standeth upright. Now that would, methinks, need a strong bone, like the bone of his thigh; yet, if his back were such, how could he bend, and stoop, and sway?"

So Theobald, the 'Pothecary of the Infirmary of the Monastery of St. Francis, told Murtagh about men's backs, and showed him how they were arranged with many bones; with joints between, and pads of gristle; and how flesh

held to their points upon the bones, so that men bent, or stood upright, as pleased them.

Of all this conversation and teaching, I knew later that it was pursued for love of me. Dear Murtagh!

In due time, Murtagh started upon his homeward journey to us at Maynooth.

But on the way he once more took the lying letter in hand, and hissed against the writer of a thing so certain to drive Lord Thomas to desperation and revenge, whereas all its allegations were false!

Upon this examination, Murtagh saw where a nail in the horse-shoe had broken the tissue of the letter. But, to his amaze, the breakage did not pierce the whole paper, or let the daylight through.

And he saw another writing inside!

The letter had appeared to be a short one, written upon both sides of a single half sheet.

But now it could be seen to be a four-page epistle, with two pages pasted together!

Then Murtagh, fearful to entrust himself with separating the pages, had put wings to his feet; and, upon the moment when he had finished his meal, he put the letter in my hand.

I delayed not about my preparations for dealing with the letter. I held it over the steam from a small chaldron, and when so damped, its sheets separated by their own weight.

The within pages were fully used for writing.

And a devilish difference their pasting together had made

to Lord Thomas FitzGerald, his parents and family, and their following!

As concerning all of which, methinks I should write better in a new chapter.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH

IT SHOWETH THE TRUE INWARDNESS OF THE DAMNABLE AND DEVILISH LETTER DECEPTFULLY PREPARED BY THOMAS CANNON AT THE TEMPTATION OF THE GALLANT CALLED "SIR ARTHUR INGOLDSTHORP" FOR THE RUIN OF THE SILKEN THOMAS

HARD though it may be to get swallowing and credence for such a story of cowardice, the following hath yet to be duly set forth.

Upon the occasion when I, Baruk Fallon, was placed for spring air in the coppice, and so heard the conversing of Lady Thomas and the gallant named Cecil, who was masquering under the name of Sir Arthur Ingoldsthorp, a reader will remember that little Jacob Ranstraw played for a banshee, and I myself was taken for a ghost arisen for their reproach.

Fainting, I remember no more; but Murtagh declares how this gallivanting Sir Arthur turned at once and fled, without one thought of the lady for whom he had protested so disloyal a love.

It will ever be a grief to me that Murtagh did not pursue and take, and hand over to Lord Thomas, this vile vampire; for, with all her faults—of coldness and of ingratitude for her unhappy husband's great love—Lady Offaly was a lady; and had the wretched Cecil been taken

and made give account of himself, veritably her scorn of his coward selfishness would have led her to warn him, at his peril, not to plot against her brave and devoted husband.

Alas! in Murtagh's care for me, and fearing the entire death of me if he left me without aid, he let the caitiff flee, who never slacked speed until he found means to get carried to Dublin, where, catching a brigantine on the eve of sailing, he took a place therein, and he never touched Ireland again—unless, indeed, those are right who aver that he was an officer of the Irish Treasury, whom I name not, being uncertain.

Whether "Cecil" were a family name or one of baptism hath never been certified—to me, at all events; but we did indeed believe it was the latter.

Murtagh said that the latest he saw of Lady Offaly, she was feebly staggering towards the Castle, the branches rending her dress and plucking her hair, inasmuch as, a hand upon her left side, she went with closed eyes, as blanched as even I! And he never saw her again!

Murtagh's simples failed to enrouse me, and when aid came, he had me carried home for the ministrance of mine aunt and of Moina.

And in their hands I came to my wits.

It would appear that even the fright to his cowardly heart could not wean this jealous foe of the fated Lord Thomas from his vile purpose of hounding his successful rival on to ruin.

Thomas Cannon had been a secretary to Sir William Skeffington; and upon this brave Sir Arthur's return to England, he came to plot with the same Thomas.

With a devil's ingenuity, he planned to play upon the rash and impetuous young man's filial nature, by causing him to be falsely advertised of his father's having been beheaded as a traitor in the Tower of London.

"But, sir!" objected Thomas Cannon, at the first hint of the hellish plot, "he will surely take no action till he have assured himself how that his father really hath been done to death."

"So speaks the mere clerk!" said the doubly false Sir Arthur insolently; "now hear the diplomatist. Hath Lord Thomas any friend whose sign he would accept for surety of statements made in a letter? Anyone, that is, upon whom thou couldest early lay finger?"

"Why, sir, there are some of the Greys who are well affected towards him, and Lord Slane hath often faithfully advised him. Then there is De la Hoyde, not just now here present in London, who hath great opinions of Lord Thomas's intelligence, but great fears for his calmness and discretion. Him we can reach in Dublin."

Now, it had come as a gossip to the false hound who called himself "Sir Arthur" how Lady Kildare had soothed her over-burdened husband before his death by saying that her cousin, the King, meant to look on at Lord Thomas's doings in authority with a friendly eye.

Also, he had seen De la Hoyde passing out of the Tower upon the very day that he himself had arrived in London, fleeing back from the side of Lady Offaly.

Craftily putting these items of news and facts together then, what maketh he but a design of a letter which should be friendly anonymous, in the terms of De la Hoyde's

own advice, and having Lady Kildare's own hope therein. But the same afterwards, having had the pages plastered together, should be readable with a vast and accursed difference!

And so was the rash and haughty young Deputy to be hounded on to the desired ruin!

Closeted with Thomas Cannon, and having only Patrick Cannon for a partner, the devil's valentine was outwritten.

For a convenience in referring to the paper, I insert a copy of the vile work as it was when laid before De la Hoyde for his endorsement by signature.

It may then be again read as Lord Thomas saw it—*id est*, pasted to make a letter of one sheet.

For, being instigated and instructed by the devil, Sir Arthur Ingoldsthorp had pasted the pages together, so making the writing breathe out cursing and murder, over the sign and seal of the judicious and friendly De la Hoyde!

But, alas! here it is, as the fair-promising and wise thing it was when he signed it!

At the Sign of the "Moon Cow";
The Fleete; London; 8th June,
1534.

To
The Revd. Father in God,
Edwardus Carey;
In the small Church in High Street,
Dublin.

Greeting!

I, an unknown friend, here enfixed in London, and loving even the dog of a FitzGerald, do yet greatly presume, in essaying the drawing of the Lord Thomas FitzGerald to any keener feeling than he at present hath, of the great filial and family duty, which, before

all Governorships, ceremonials, authorities, or ambitions, now lieth so weightily upon him.

For, in a word, his noble father, having earlier been taken into honorable trial by The King, hath, just at this writing heard from His Majesty that it is once more intended to make the Geraldine Family the sealed accredited bearers of His Majesty's dignity and authority in Ireland. For all mine unworthiness, I have yet had the means to learn that His Majesty hath bent personal attent to the oppositions offered to The Earl of Kildare and his family, in the wise wielding of their great power, and their knowledge of men for the better ordering of affairs in His, to wit The King's, provinces in Ireland. And the same of the tribes, lands, chattels, properties, *etcetera*, and peoples under their own and the other great and noble governing families. And to that end, he would on the instant return, with all authoritie, and with every honor, Lord Kildare, Lord Thomas's father, to Ireland, for the confusion of his enemies, were it not that the Gracious Sovereigne hath a most beneficent curiosity to see for himself how, without prompting, Lord Thomas will personally bear himself as now placed, in the very flower of his youth, having such great and weighty charges upon him.

Therefore, dear Father, make all diligence, when cometh this writing unto thee, to urge upon Lord Thomas all zeale with discretion in Governance,—all tenderness to the peoples,—with firmness that is,—and all Loyalty to The Gracious Sovereigne. And as for his enemies, they would, if here present to-day, have been cut shorter, or been sternly done to death,—even the lingering and grotesque death still legal to be done upon traitors!

I implore thee, therefore, Father, to say unto him: "Up then! and be a man, and worthy of thy race!" I may not prompt him in particulars, or more plainly set out my plain meaning; or even fill thy time with a longer letter.

But I pass this to thine hand after touch of that of the loyal friend De la Hoyde, the tried and true in all affairs of The Geraldines, whom I have prayed to add his word of knowledge and approbation to mine all too brief counsel.

In testimony whereof he hath above affixed his sign. And so I rest, thy dutiful friend and servant,—

THAT-MAY-NOT-NAME-HIM.

To
The Revd. Father in God,
Edwardus Carey,
In the small Church of the
High Street,
Dublin,
Ireland.

Heed this Worthily.—
Thy Friend,
James De la Hoyde.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH

THE HEAT OF MY AUNT VIMBELA TO URGE LORD THOMAS TO PLEAD THE DECEIT DONE ON HIM, AND OBTAIN HIS LIFE BY THE SURRENDER OF HIS STRONGHOLD; BUT THE LAST CAST OF THE DIE WAS LOST

THE four who were present at my reading aloud of this letter, with its devilish double meaning, were my Aunt Vimbela, Moina, Murtagh, and, to be sure, myself, whilst Moina's mother was away to buy bread and flesh, and to gather cresses at the brook.

When I had finished reading, pointing to the words, and showing the difference made by sticking the leaves together, there was a silence amongst us, which was first broken when Moina burst into a flood of tears!

The grimness which overshadowed Murtagh's face was terrible to behold. He continued silent.

Dazed and stunned, I but looked from one to the other.

I had lived to hold in my hand the fruits of the very plot conceived by the villain Cecil in the oak coppice, which Lady Offaly had said she would neither further nor hinder!

Had she then promised her hand or her favour to her former gallant, I should have waited but a short time before I branded her as responsible in moral senses for the murders done by Lord Thomas, her husband, after reading the letter.

But it was my Aunt Vimbela's voice, ever before so sweet and musical, which now first broke silence, shrill and harsh.

"Thrice accursed," she called aloud, "be the brain that plotted, and the hand that formed, this foul thing! Thrice over fall upon them every curse in the Edict from Rome about Offaly! I cannot breathe with that hell-clawed epistle spread out before me! It is white, written with black, stained a little with honest mud and a horse's shoe; but if the works of damnation made the marks of damnation, then had it been scarlet like blood, and writ in hell-fire!

"Murtagh! thou wilt fly to Lord Thomas and show him this! But, alas! it is now thy time for needed rest—*I*—*I* will go!

"*As the Lord liveth, he shall humble himself to the King, showing this letter for his excuse!*

"Fold the paper tenderly, Martyn, as though we loved it!

"Stay me not! I will go!

"Lord Thomas hath still many servants, and much help of munitions from the O'Conor Don. His mighty Castle standeth, certain long to defy any assault that the King's men may bring against it. It were worth the King's while to save the lives and times and costs of all the sieging; and these shall Offaly offer up to the King's majesty!

"And my Lady Kildare, who is the King's own cousin, shall plead for her stepson. All will be well!

"In God's name, give me the writing! Offaly hath such few stakes that nothing must be for an hour risked! I tremble even for the strong Castle now! This morning I deemed it to have twelve months of fight in its mighty

walls! My cloak! my pattens! some money from the stocking! *Now, the letter!*"

But just then the door flung open; Moina's mother, pale and staring, rushed in, and miserably dropping all she had in her hands on floor and tables, she gasped out:

"All is over! The Deputy's standard floats over the Castle! The sojers are within! Christopher Parese, for a thousand pounds, hath betrayed the garrison! There is no ray of light for Lord Thomas!"

. . . . . .

"Vimbela! thou art good and brave," murmured the Prophet; "but remove thy cloak! It was the weird of the Silken Thomas to suffer from treachery, and to be guilty of profitless blood-shedding! Yesterday, for his Castle, he might have had at the least his poor life. To-day he hath nothing to offer; and were he to give himself up, why, the devil might thank him, for all the King would! Ye rightly say it is over! And we of this house can do no more!"

At Murtagh's words, Vimbela slowly removed her cloak, and shook her head. And as she turned away to prepare a meal, many soldiers ramped across the market-place beating drums, blowing trumps, wheezing pipes, and cheering for the King's majesty, who had triumphed over the caitiff rebel, FitzGerald, and eaten up his mighty Castle!

So our meal was sad, and we sorrowfully wondered what had befallen to the ladies FitzGerald. They had moved to their sister's house when the certainty came of the Castle's long besiegement; and later, away from our province, but we knew not whither.

. . . . . .

I thought it strange that Murtagh could so soon change his thought when he turned to me, and pressed queries about my back.

Was I more at ease as I lay straight, or on my side, or my face, or bent? Had I hot shootings down the legs? Were there movings in the back when I moved? And a dozen more.

With the treachery of Parese, the loss of Lord Thomas's last chance, the roystering of the soldiers, the firing of some houses—for no cause that ever we heard—and the other cares of the time on our hearts, it seemed that the questions were beside all purpose.

So, with some curtness that I do think was unwonted, I answered one question, but asked three others.

Murtagh moved gently away to his room; and my aunt, coming to my side, laid a hand on my forehead.

"Ah!" she tenderly said, "my Martyn's head burns. When he is well, he is never short with his loving and gentle friend, Murtagh!"

"But, aunt," quoth I, "is this a time to ask about the ailings of a cripple who can help no one, and who hath ailed for years? I have no patience—"

"Indeed, it is so, Martyn; but thou art concerned and ill. Only know this once for all—Murtagh, our gifted Murtagh, never speaks without knowledge and a purpose. The more certain is it, from his putting aside other and such great questions, that he is revolving and purposing some good to thee. Have that very patience of which thou sayest thou hast a lack!"

Ah! in the later days I remembered those words, and I said:

"Had not the Lord put it in Murtagh's heart to have patience towards me, then I must needs have shown a million-fold more of the quality than any act or word of Murtagh ever called for!"

"Patience," forsooth!

And from me!

And towards Murtagh! Oh!

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH

WITH ITS SAD TELLING OF THE STRAITS TO WHICH, AFTER LOSS OF HIS CASTLE, THE SILKEN THOMAS WAS PUT

ALL unknowing of the surrender of his Castle, Lord Thomas, chiefly by the aid of the O'Conor Faly, had got together seven thousand men; and deeming the fortress safe, he marched with easy stages to drive the King's troops from before it.

Had he known that the English soldiers had been set free by the surrender of the Castle, he would have gone away by a round, and have kept his men together.

But as it was, his gallow-glasses, wandering and straggling, were cut off from the main body; and at Naas Sir William Brereton made prisoners of one hundred and forty of them.

Then, to all but the Silken Thomas himself came the news that the Castle had been surrendered for a bribe by Christopher Parese!

When at last he heard it, within a march of the Castle, he began to faint, thus proving that his hopes had vacillated betwixt the holding out of the Castle and the chance of his submission being accepted upon its surrender.

But now, losing the fortress was to lose all conditions that he could offer for his life, and it was also to lose his men! One by one they slipped away; and the Silken Thomas felt that, to act the wise man, he should as soon

as possible give battle. As well risk that as see his numbers dwindling. He preferred corpses to the vacant places of deserters!

There was, too, the bare chance of a success.

Both armies advanced; but, too late, it was found that an impassable bog (or morass) separated them.

Several of the cannon no longer required at the siege were with the Imperial troops, and when many shots, to which no return could be made, had shaken the disposition and broken up all cohesion amongst the troops of the rebel, the rest of the party dispersed.

. . . . . .

From that hour the Lord Thomas, who had so rashly cut himself off from power as a Deputy, now ceased to be even a military leader; and the most and worst of his work thereafter was when he made sudden forays or galled the King's servants in detail, like a chief of brigands.

The county of Delvin Ratha [1] stretcheth East and West across this part of Ireland. Or, if it pleaseth one to take count of the point wherein is the O'Carrolls' Castle of Clonlisk, then the lie of the county is N.E. to S.W.

Great part of this county, and of Kildare and other, its neighbours, is overlaid by the great peat swamp, in which, on a portion of dry land shaped like a cross, is the town of Tullagh.

Now, there was no chief or fighting man in all the land who better knew every boghole, every sound patch, and every tussock on which the foot might bide for a moment in safety, and then for a quick spring to another, than the

[1] King's County.

Silken Thomas. He who dazzled all men, and won songs from the Harpers by the spick-spanness of his attire on occasion,—he, I say, also knew how to be happy in such plight from struggling through the peat-water, that (he holding plants of broom and heather without motion above his head) the wild-ducks have alighted beside him at his call, and been taken by his hands alone.

He could tell where the antlers of our gigantic stags could be found; and one whole bone frame of such a wonder, he had caused to be set up in the Castle of Maynooth. Murtagh helped with the iron framing for the same.

I myself have raced the young Lord over this treacherous land, but never to his defeat.

And, ay, in scores of places hath he doffed his cap and made the Sign of the Cross, telling me in a whisper, that, yonder, upright in the black sludge, stood a warrior of the following of Eogan More, who had fled, wounded, from the slaughter of Moylena by the followers of Con of the Hundred Battles. Or it might be thus that he would say:

"A man's length below that little gnarled oak tree, in the black bog sludge, sleepeth an aged woman, with her arms around her knees, aud her face sunk between. The water hath saved her, too, from decay. Around her neck is a collar of three hundred and sixty-five gold barrel beads. Twelve heavy rings of gold are on her arms, and a brooch shaped like a horse's shoe, with ends nearly meeting, hath tangled in the fifty-two brown plaits of her hair. They worshipped the sun in this part at one time; and she was

a priestess of the temple. There be five vast stones therefrom, near the surface, yonder."

Whither should the poor distressed rebel flee, but to inaccessible places in the great bog which he knew thus well? And inasmuch as Kildare is to the East, Lord Thomas moved some twenty or thirty miles farther away, West.

At some of his rest-places, he built forts of the turf, quite up to the treacherous waters of the swamp. At others, he and his following trusted to their knowledge of the land, and the carefulness of the watching. Times and again they have walked away at their ease, whilst those who had been sent against them (thinking they trod in their very steps!) found themselves wallowing in dangerous quagmires on the right hand and on the left, so that many sank and rose no more.

The like plan also did O'Conor follow, when his turn came. And of a truth, barring treachery, such difficulties might come to the pursuing foes of those who knew the morasses, that the grant of good terms might be unavoidable.

In one place with knowledge and contrivance, the rebel set up falcons, and other great guns. Now, for the carrying of these over such country, the soldiers of the King had no way of accounting. Nay, even when such forts and abiding-places were destroyed with fire by the pursuers, what loss was there? The camps had been of mere tabernacles built without brick or stone, of wattles, and having the floor strawed with rushes.

Food, they had to carry none with them. Everywhere

the country folks allowed of their taking milk, meat, and butter, for the chiefs, and barley and pea-flour ground between quernes, and made into bread of cakes called haraan. These for the followers. For their drinking, there was no lack of buttermilk; while beer was very good, and eau-de-vie excellent.

Often did Lord Thomas ease the aching of his own sad heart by teaching his followers that there was all to hope from his good and noble stepmother being sister to the Lord Leonard Grey who had been commissioned to parley with him.

"And what of shame have we, my friends? When I led you on this quest, all knowledge pointed out that my right noble and especially beloved father had been done to death as a traitor. What son would not strike out against such a wrong as that? Ay! although it were but with a wooden spoon. When we knew that my father still lived, even although as a sad and innocent prisoner in London Tower, I did speedily beg to have my submission taken for anything that I had done against our sovereign lord, the King's grace, by his son, the Duke of Richmond. When that mote not be, I offered terms of surrender, on surety of our lives and lands, through Lord Leonard Grey. But I plainly set forth then, with my own hand, that without terms I should fight for my life. Now, the King's people well know how hardly set all would be to catch us in these bogs."

It hath been said, however, that Lord Thomas's views and moods varied, like the same of his father. We heard of his vowing that so far from his seeking to get on fair

terms with the English, he would even send away his lady-wife, because she was English! But, I would the rather wail with Murtagh that, had his beautiful young wife been of more loving motions towards him, he might have sooner submitted himself, and so have charmed aside his dismal weird and most melancholic destiny!

Once he lay in ambush outside Rathangan, and drove cattle across the land. When the soldiers came out of the fortress, he killed a large number of them. But how could that favourably affect his fortunes, or he think that it would do so?

Again, the Silken Thomas fired a few old houses and dung-heaps near Trim, and sent word that "The Rebel" was burning a large village hard by. The soldiers came out to the rescue, and were slain!

This, of course, was foolish and shameful. But the reprisals of the authorities were undignified and cruel.

Only because the son of Sir William De la Hoyde was found guilty of treason, Sir William himself and his dame (Janet Eustace formerly) were arrested, being brought from Moyglare to Dublin. In the Castle they were imprisoned separately; but even when threatened with the rack and death, the lady would not say one word incriminating of Sir William. When this brave and good woman died, her holy remains were for five days denied Christian burial! For the Deputy said that the best that could be expected by the mother of an arch-traitor was that her body should lie upon the dung-heap!

During all this time, Sir William Skeffington had been sickening unto death. But he tried one more expedition.

Whiles that all these hurrying cases and instances were happening, there were many sore hearts which, hitherto, have had no historians.

James De la Hoyde had fled into Scotland. He had at last come to know the circumstances of the deceptful letter; and it was a grief to him until his death that he had not perceived the awful signification of the document as folded, and the sense which folding gave to his signature.

It hath seemed good unto me, in all these writings, to leave untold of much that concerns the other great houses.

But, alas! there were deaths and sorrows amongst Ormondes, Butlers—families on the right hand and on the left!

And not in Ireland (or by Nature) only. In England, Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher were executed; and as one was the King's tutor and the other was Chancellor, who could consider his head safe upon his neck after that he had made a public mark?

Much broken in power and in his hold as a commander upon the people, lonely in heart and life, and right hopeless of pardon for his trespasses, the Silken Thomas (though such a name seems misplaced upon a hunted outlaw!) for the last time entrenched himself upon an island of the Bog of Allen.

On the 3rd of August, 1535, the Imperial troops, having plundered the country around, made a feint of retreating; but only to draw the Earl's men into the open, where they, numbering half a thousand, might have been taken or slain, but for the greed of English soldiers, who, to secure

plunder, made way for the escape of the prisoners. Lord Thomas was himself arrested, but was let to pass by men of his family's following. Lord Leonard Grey destroyed the place, which ditched, watered, and of great force, would have been impregnable if manned, gunned, and stored with victuals.

Keating having been taken prisoner, and Sir William's expedition having caused O'Conor to submit, there remained no ally to the Silken Thomas.

Accordingly, he wrote the following letter to his step-uncle, about the 17th of August; and I have seen and copied the same:

"To The Right Worshipful Lord Leonard Grey
delyver this with spede!

"After all du recummendacions, I hartely recummend me unto your Lordshyp; certyfiyng you, that whereas I have done any thyng contrary agaynst my Sovyryng Lord, the Kinges Grace ys mind, cam nothyng of my owne mere mosyon, butt onely by your cownsayll, the which bene in your Lordshypy's cumpany now, as ben Thomas Ewstas and Gerald Gerott, Shane ys son, with dyvers othyrs, by the which I was gowernyd all that tyme, and dyd nothyng butt afftyr their mynd, the which I reportt me to all the Lordes of the Englys Pale!

"Wherefore I hartely desyre your Lordshyp to be interssessor for me betwyxt my said Ys Grase and me; that I may have my pardon for me, and myn lyff and landes, the which shall not be ondyservyd to the uttermost of my power; and yff I cannott optayne my forsayd pardon, I

have no nothyr to do butt shyfte for myselff, the best that I can, trustyng in God, who preserv your Lordshyp.

"By your lovyn friend,

"T. FitzGerald."

Verily, methought all this mighty sad!

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH

EXPOSETH THE FALSE COMFORT OF PROMISES BY WHICH THE SILKEN THOMAS WAS WON TO SURRENDER; AND THE SOPHISM BY WHICH THE KING CONTENTED HIS CONSCIENCE FOR BREAKING THE PLEDGES OF HIS AMBASSADORS

"And now cometh the strain of an occasion which future days must resolve," saith Murtagh, in the talking over of the matter, "from doubt of kingly treachery on the one hand, or weakness of punishment to murderers and active rebels on the other.

"I saw the young Earl upon the day before that letter was written; and I know accurately that whiles his enemies will say the sentence about acts of his own motion meaneth a putting of the blame for his rebellions upon others,—he being no clerk, and but a poor labourer with pens at English writing, only essayed to tell that it was by hopes of such lenient views, and by the advice of Lord Leonard Grey—his step-mother's own brother—that he would surrender upon promise of life and lands, after confession of misdeeds as aforesaid.

"Moreover, in a disguise of a travelling monk, I was present when, on the 18th of August, 1535, the same Lord Leonard Grey met the young Earl at the borders of the

great moving bog, who there and then surrendered to the King's mercy after a parley, and upon promise of pardon in England; whereupon the blessed Sacrament was shared between them in open camp, and I partook, as who could refuse me?

"And the King's difficulty is this: that Sir William Skeffington, writing upon the 24th of August, reporting the traitor's surrender, said he had surrendered without condition either of pardon, life, lands, or goods! But indeed, why should Lord Thomas have so surrendered then? He was not besieged or in any danger by enemies. He even had to steal away by night to tender his submission, which his followers would not have approved.

"Also, when the Council, on 27th of August, reported the young Earl's further confession and submission, they besought the King's Highness most humbly, that 'according to the comfort of their words, spoken to allure him to yield him, the King would be merciful to the said Thomas, especially as concerning his life.'

"Now, therefore," pursued Murtagh, with much frowning of thought, "what shall the King do in this conflict of report?

"If he shall execute the poor traitor, he hath broken the pledged word of his ambassadors, and, as confessed by the Council, hath taken the game like a poacher.

"But if he shall spare him, how shall he ever again punish treason and murther?"

I, myself, came lately to the knowledge of how the King felt the dilemma too; for he wrote thankfully of the apprehension of the young Earl; yet saying that if the

traitor had been apprehended in such way as was more convenable to his deserts, it had been better to his (the King's) contentation.

. . . . . .

Looking over these poor writings more than two years from the time thereof, I am able to show the way that was taken out of the strain of the difficulty. It was by the advice of the Duke of Norfolk, and was as followeth (advised on the 9th September):

In this matter, said the Duke, all concerned were fallible, and any perfect resolution of the doubt cannot be.

Nevertheless, inasmuch as Lord Leonard Grey and the Council obtained the traitor's surrender by promises of his life, give him his life.

And, inasmuch as his crimes make him guilty of death over and over, give him death! What is delayed is not abandoned. That is, give him his life for one year or two years, as life was promised; and at term thereof, give him the one death which he hath so eagerly deserved, even that of a murderous traitor!

This the Duke put in a longer wording in a letter of the 9th September.

And (woe is for me, that hath to tell of it!) this is the sophistry that was done upon the man whose history runneth through these, my poor writings, as shall in its due sad time appear.

Meanwhile, I have come to know that, moved upon by three pains, Lady Offaly (or, as I had liefer and better call her, the Countess Kildare) did write one letter to her husband.

First, her haughty spirit, in the ignorance of which she had said she would never be of blood or bond with a traitor, was broken by the knowledge that even her father, Sir Adrian Fortescue, had moved to a shameful end as such.

Secondly, her former lover, of whose race and name I did never certainly acquaint me, thinking he saw opportunity for his evil wishes in her case as touching her separateness from her husband, did shock her soul with proposals that threatened a wider severance from the respect of herself.

And third, by compare therewith, her husband's endurance of her unloving ways, his honourable love to herward, and loyal silence from any complaining or reproach, through all his pains and sorrows, seemed to reach her empty heart, even as her coming to know of Thomas Cannon's false letter was a sufficing explication of Offaly's rebellion to her reason.

When she heard, therefore, at the surrender, that terms bearing up to possible pardon had been promised to the young Earl, she wrote, with much grace, that her father's conduct and position put her out of court as an accuser of him, her husband, and saying that she would consent to have interviews with him, as, and for, means of arranging how they could for the future stand better related.

Alas! the young Earl never saw comfort of that letter, God help him!

The ship in which, with much parade and cost, Lord Leonard Grey took the Earl to England as a prisoner, crossed the same which carried the Countess's letter.

Upon the way to Windsor, the prisoner and escort were

met by the King's order for the Silken Thomas to be brought to the royal hunting at Winchester. And I have heard that the King did cause him to hunt before him for beyond a week. Then, on a sudden, came commands for the forthwith imprisonment of the Earl in the Tower.

With so much difficulty of following and despatching, the letter of the Countess became amissing.

Which is, indeed, in no way wondrous, inasmuch as my Lord Chancellor Audley, giving pronouncement much like unto the Duke of Suffolk's counsel, it was only for the discovery of any other treasons by his means that the Earl was let to be a live man. All letters to himward were espied and examined, he having none rights, being an outlaw, and so the very paper might be wore out ere ever it came to his hand!

. . . . . .

Lord Leonard Grey took benefit of over £300 for reward, and for the expenses of carrying his sister's stepson to prison and death!

Which did him little good, if Murtagh be a true prophet of what will one day come to this same avaricious and false man!—a man who would bring his own sister's stepson, and one who had trusted his word, manacled to the man Poole, on the road to the Court!

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH

WHEREIN THE MELANCHOLY OF A SAD TIME IS DIVERTED BY THE CLEVER FOOLISHNESS OF AN OBSTINATE ATTORNEY ON SEARCH-DUTY

THERE followed now the stress of lean times upon us. Had it not been for Murtagh, it is hard saying how all had fared with my poor household.

Lands everywhere wasted and out of harvest in all the baronies of Kildare, people loth to till the land lest the fruits should be wrested from them by those who assumed rights therein on one or other side, and all benefit of present-residing lordships wanting, by reason of the turmoil in Maynooth, at Powerscourt, and at all the great houses, how could there be aught except famine?

But Murtagh ever knew where to lay hands upon a leveret on her form, or upon a hand-sack of meal, or even upon a coin wherewith to furnish some other necessary.

Foreseeing such days, he, like a taunted Noah, or a provident Joseph, had laid by whatever he knew would be lacking. There was no wasting, and no display of a store; but the day's needs were met by the day's provender, and all was safe as to our daily bread. For which having thanked God, we shared, as Murtagh directed, with our neighbours.

Besides, Moina and her mother bred poultry, and planted the land by the house with wholesome garbages; and wove and span, and gathered sticks, and helped in sickness; so that none might say they ate in idleness.

And my helplessness being well known, we were left in peace. Except, indeed, when one day, closing September, came an attorney, supported by an officer and several soldiers, who with harshness demanded all papers and parchments, deeds and rolls of the Kildares, that were in mine own caretaking.

When, with a heavy heart, I began explaining that I would honour the King's process, and that I would direct him where to find all he sought—he, a hunchback who had only one eye, bent the same cunningly upon me, and said:

"My good clerk, thou seemest to be of mine own estate as to the spine; and I never knew an hunchback, except only myself, who was not deceitful. Therefore, in pursuance of Mr. Secretary Cromwell's order, upon advice of Sir William Brabazon, I shall take no word, no evidence but from mine own eyes" (he that said it had but one!) "of the whereabouts of the papers of the rebel's family.

"To that end, I shall make commencement of my search with thy bed!"

Now, the note of joy or mirth hath had but scant place in these histories, God wot! so I welcome mine opening to lug it in now.

"By St. George of Merrie England!" as some of our swash-bucklers are never tired of saying, I protested then, as I do now, that I had none intention but only dutifully to hand over all which Mr. Attorney came to claim in the service of the King's majesty!

That very week Murtagh had taken up to his garret two boxes of thin iron, in which all that was of import in the documents of the Kildare family had lain for years—to mend hinges, to oil locks, and to put soft leather at the lid-closings to keep out damp.

In the meanwhile, Moina had placed the muniments themselves all orderly in her clean large basket for wools. Her knittings and weavings and balls of wool came loosely atop, but without expectancy or craft or design of any kind; and, indeed, all in the open part of the room.

The removal of the two boxes having left empty the panelled cupboard, what needs must hap but the weeny dwarf, without mine observance, making a game for himself by enrobing in his dress of a fairy king, and shutting himself up in the same cupboard.

When the cunning attorney declared that he would search my bed, I did indeed desire to be spared the fatigue and pain of moving.

"I made no doubt you would advance this plausible plea," said the King's messenger, with a cunning smile, "but my men at hand shall lift you with all care on to another trestle—for search your bed must I!"

"But," said I, plainly pointing to the basket, "the papers are not in my bed; they are every one in—"

"Silence, in the King's name!" roared the attorney; "one word hereafter is treason. I tell you I shall search for myself!"

So I was silent; and they lifted me upon sacks on the floor, and only found in my bed papers of no import, foolish verses of mine own composure to Moina, ordinary accompts of the Earl's household prepared for, or by, my brother

Charles; and pages of this very writing, most of which were afterwards returned, on plea and labour by Murtagh, much greased, blotted, and disputed; but some were missing.

Everywhere searched the attorney with his crafty eye, anon making gestures of warning that I should not utter one word on pain of hanging, which he signified by passing his fingers around his neck and looking strangled. But nothing he noticed Moina's great basket, except to kick it, blaspheming, under my trestle, when he had had me once again laid thereon! For two hours he searched the house, and two soldiers stood over me, with halberds in hand, enforcing silence.

"By'r Lord Harry!" quoth the cunning lawyer, "I believe the fairies—which these wild Irish do entirely hold to exist—have spirited away every deed and every paper! Whatever are in his present charge are only these same which I have found, and whatever may be under his very eye in this his living-room."

So he tapped the walls with his horn- eaded cane, and at last came to the cupboard in the panel.

"Ha, ha!" cried he, "so I blamed the fairies, did I? This hiding-place may tell us more than the fairies ever will! We shall see!"

At first he turned the handle every wrong way; but at last, with a heavy tug, he pulled open the door so lubberly as to hit himself hard upon the chin.

And there stood the weeny dwarf, much affrighted of the strangers, from whom after his game he had remained

a-hiding, acting his part of the fairy king with waving wings, and stretching his arms as one about to fly!

Now my aunt, any more than I, had not noticed how Jacob had hidden in the cupboard; and when she saw him stretching towards the angry attorney, who had just been cursing at pain of his bump, she feared for her little favourite, and uttered a scream, which seemed one of terror at the apparition!

Beyond that I know not much, for Mr. Attorney and his officer and soldiers all fled backwards over my bed, which overturning (to my great dolour), they all fell heavily.

Then, despising the ladder, they all jumped upon one another to the ground! Lastly, not waiting, as children say, to pick themselves up, they scrambled away in all directions.

My Aunt Vimbela was jostled as they rushed out, and came with trembling to my side. Finding my trestle overturned, and me sunk in laughter, despite all mine aches and helplessness, she thought some fear or cruelty had sent me distraught!

When I had made her easy upon that, she and Moina's mother helped me a-bed once more.

"What sought they?" said Moina.

"They sought for two hours," said I, "for what they could not find, because it was under their noses!" and I laughed more.

"What was it then, say, dear Martyn?"

"Those roll and documents," cried I, and I pointed to the floor, now littered to the very windore with the documents which they had spilled in their flight.

Whereat, when understood, my dear ones laughed along with me; and we laugh upon it together unto this day. Even Murtagh, of usual so staid, hath made what soundeth like a proverb, saying on occasion, "Not seeing with their eyes, because under their noses—like the King's Attorney!"

As I have recorded, we were no more troubled by lawyers!

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-NINTH

SHOWETH THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHECY IN THE FOURTH CHAPTER AS TO THE EARL'S FIVE UNCLES, THE MEAN ENTREATMENT OF THE YOUNG EARL HIMSELF, AND HIS HUMBLE LETTERS COMMENDING TO OTHERS THE GOOD SERVICE OF THE KING WHOM HE HAD HIMSELF DEFIED

In want and sadness, and also in turmoil except as regards our own home's peace, the months rolled by.

The Lord Deputy Skeffington died upon the last day of the year at Kilmainham, near Dublin, and his body was buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral; where may he rest better than he did suffer others to do. Amen!

He was succeeded by Lord Leonard Grey as Deputy, the King thus fulfilling his royal promise of October, 1535, as stated upon the Earl's apprehension:

"We give you our hearty thanks, assuring you what We esteme this and other, your good services mynystered unto Us, ther and elles wher, in such sort, as (besides the lande and prayse worthie therunto) moche to your fame and commendacion. We will have the same in our remembraunce, to your comfort and condigne reward and advauncement."

And so that most melancholy year of 1535 passed away.

But early in February of the next year, Lord Leonard Grey invited three uncles of the Earl of Kildare (still himself a prisoner in the Tower) to a banquet at Kilmainham. These were Sir James and his brothers, Walter and Richard—all of whom had warned and opposed Lord Thomas in his rebellion, and who expected no danger.

With meat in their teeth, they were seized and chained. The brothers who had joined in the insurrection—to wit, Oliver and John—were also arrested.

It was hoped that the young boy, Gerald, son of Lady Elizabeth Grey as Countess of Kildare, could be taken too; but he had been carried off by Thomas Leverous, his tutor. And his story may be matter for my further writing.

About St. Valentine's Day, all the five Geraldines were shipped off to England, and were accompanied by the Master of the Rolls and the Lord Chief Justice.

Now, let this be noted: the ship in which they were passed over was called *The Cow*, and in a sense the ancient prophecy was fulfilled. It was upon learning this name that Sir Richard FitzGerald, who had previously cheered his brethren, quite gave way to melancholy.

"Now, good brethren," quoth he, dismayed, "I am in utter despair of our living ever again to see Ireland, for I bear in mind an old prophecy that five Earl's brethren should be carried in a cow's belly to England, from thence never to return."

But as in any way bearing upon any hope of mine own recovery, it was only a subject for a smile or a weary shake of the head to hear all this.

It was on the 1st of May, 1536, only, that the Act of

Attainder, the first Act of the Irish Parliament, was passed. And an English Act followed in the same year.

Lord Thomas had most surely been Earl of Kildare since the demise of his father, and no after-attainder could affect that. Thus was another of the old prophecies very oddly fulfilled, for people have oftentimes declared that "The Silken Thomas" never came to earldom and the seers had said that his so-doing would be quibbled of.

Alas! the prisoners were coldly or cruelly entreated. The Earl received twenty shillings a week as subsistence money during the "life" (lasting twenty months) which was granted to him for "contentacion" of the most Christian King's conscience. The other Geraldines had smaller provision made for them.

So many of the people of the neighbouring counties had come under the attainder (and verily, Murtagh and I, for our long loyalty and unending friendship to Lord Thomas, might, God wot, have been amongst them!) that what were now King's lands were lying fallow; also, Lord Desmond entered upon the property lately of the Earls of Kildare.

All this had to be adjusted by pardons for the people, and by forcible recovery of the properties from the Earl of Desmond.

The cause of all this danger and discomfort—poor, unhappy man!—had himself so little comfort of all his ill-deeds that I copy two letters of his. The first is to his servant, John Rothe. I have heard that for the prisoner's nominal subsistence—money, aforesaid, all that really reached him was the poorest food, and that same not in

too great supply. It was a ticklish matter, just then, to be addressed as "loving friend" by one who had avowed his willingness to "die Henry's rebel!" Also, there were laws against giving comfort to traitors, which worked, I trow, to the leaving him (as in this letter set forth) to the cruel tender mercies of his gaolers.

"John Rothe,

"I. H. S.

"My trusty Servant,

"I hartely commend me unto you. I pray you that you will delyver thys othyr letter to O'Bryen. I have sent to hym for £20 starlyng; the which yff he take you (as I trust he woll) then I woll that you com over and bryng ytt onto my Lord Crumwell, that I may so have ytt. I never had any mony syns I cam to pryson but a nobull; nor I have had nothyr hosen, dublet, nor shoys; nor shyrt but on; nor any othyr garment but a syngyll fryse gowne, for a velve furred with bowge; and so I have gone wolward, ay, and barefote, and barelegyd, dyverse tymes (when ytt hath not ben very warme); and soe I shuld have done styll and now, but that pore prysoners of their gentylness hath sumtyme gevyn me old hosyn and shoys, and old shyrtes.

"This I wryt unto you, not as complaynyng of my fryndes, but for to show you the trewth of my grete nede, that you shuld be the more dylygent in goyng onto O'Bryen, and in bryngyng me the before sayd £20, wherby I myght the soner have here mony to by me clothys, and

also to amend my slender comyns and fare, and for othyr necessaryes.

"I woll you take owte of that you brynge me for your costes and labur.

"I pray you have me commended onto all my lovers and frynds, and show them that I am in gude helthe.

"By me,

"THOMAS FYTZGERALD.

"To my trusty and welbelovyd
"servante, John Rothe."

. . . . . .

Enclosed in that letter was this following, viz. :—

"JHESUS,

"My specyall and belovyd frynd, I hartely commend me onto you. And I beseche and pray you to delyver and send me by thys berer, my trusty servante, John Rothe, £20 starlyng, upon the plate that you have in custodie of myn. And in soe doyng you shall show me very gret kyndnes and plesure; for I have nowe very gret nede. Also, I beseche you that you do not breke nor square with the Deputie, but rathyr agree with hym. And also I beseche you to helpe hym in the Kynge's besynes yff he hath nede; and so shall you do the Kynge's Grace plesure, the which you may be sure His Grace woll bothe remember and reward; and in so doyng you shall also bynde me to do for you any thynge that shall be in my power.

"By your lovyng frynd,

"THOMAS FYTZGERALD.

"To my trusty and welbelovyd
"frynd, O'Bryen."

It hath oftentimes been a consolation to them that loved the FitzGeralds, that even although sometimes glad to be in friendly harness with kind prisoners not even of the class of their menial servants at Maynooth, Kilkea, and so forth, there were some peers of Lord Thomas's in durance when he was there confined. Henry, the fifth of the Earls of Northumberland, had two sons, Thomas and Ingram Percy, who for being of the quaint religious rebellion of the time, were imprisoned. The elder was executed at Tyburn. "Ingelram," as his brother called him, was pardoned. But their company was cheering to our poor young Lord. They spoke with much reverence of his father, whom, as a prisoner, they had been allowed to see. Many dreams had these three of good hunting together. They shared that healthful garden labour which was applied to them for a task, and which they ever simulated to resent. The Percies also loved legends and histories; and when occasion fitted, the Silken Thomas whispered the fokelore, so much of which Murtagh, and even I, had taught him. In exchange, the young noblemen from the border would sing sweetly of their native vales, so far away. Besides, there was a certain priest or abbot of Whallie, near Lancashire, who was a prisoner in a cause not very different from the trouble of the Percies. He told in whispers of all promised by the King—a Parliament at York, and much benefactions to the small monasteries. But there was more, I trow, of beheading of abbots, and other exercises of the sort, than of Parliament-giving, and benefactions!

Many prisoners whose misfortunes made them like unto

tender friends of the Silken Thomas, had to bid him farewell on summons which could never mean but the one thing! And these never met again upon the earth.

. . . . . .

And so I leave the hapless outlawed Earl, whiles I may say something of my own humble self; but indeed, more for thanks of my dear Murtagh than for any interest to be discovered in my health or affairs.

CHAPTER THE FORTIETH

OF THE AWFUL BENEFIT DONE UNTO THE CRIPPLED CLERK, MARTYN BARUK FALLON, BY HIS FAITHFUL FRIEND, MURTAGH, ALL OUT OF HIS OWN COURAGE, BUT HAVING HELP AND COUNTENANCE AND INSTRUCTION THEREIN BY THE APOTHECARY OF ST. FRANCIS—THE GOOD RESULT

When Murtagh had conversed with the Apothecary in the Abbey of St. Francis, it was all for the good of me!

All his poring over bones of animals was that he might help me in my maims, if that the Lord willed.

Once and again Murtagh sought leave, upon opportunity of pain from a bad season, or what not, to soothe me by gentle handlings of the ailing spine.

He ever did me good with his liniments and rubbings; and, as I now know, his hope was to keep the places sound and limber thereby, awaiting the time for his great stroke.

It came to be the 3rd of November, in 1536, and for two days Murtagh had been making a walking frame, so he called it, for me. It had arm-rests and wheels, and as I understood, I was in the same to take exercises without danger by falls, or by leaning too heavily on my feeble legs.

Upon that day, to the event of which, he assured me, he had prepared me by the exercises which had kept mine

arms almost in their strength, he moved me to trust him wholly, and with his and mine Aunt Vimbela's assistance, to place myself in this frame.

Considering that I had now been crippled since the January of 1532—that is, nearly five years—the courage that Murtagh gave unto me made my first essay a good one.

Holding by a cross-bar above my head, and leaning forward somewhat upon a wadded desk or board placed before me, I easily made the circuit of the room thrice, using my feeble limbs a little, and when restored to my trestle, was none the worse.

That same evening the Apothecary of the Infirmary in the Monastery of St. Francis, Dublin, being present, I offered to again use my walking frame, and I required less help than in the morning. Nay, I rallied Murtagh, who was pale and solemn, methought.

I made circuit of the room once.

"Dear Martyn," said Murtagh, "rely now almost every whit upon the grip of the hands, but bend a little forwards."

Whiles I obeyed, Murtagh was behind, giving me his tender, powerful hands for support of my back.

Suddenly the Monk Apothecary shouted loudly:

"In God's name, *now!*"

"Amen!" murmured Murtagh.

But unto me it seemed that the very end of the world was come!

The Apothecary had pulled a cord, and the cross-bar, upon which was my whole weight hanging, came in two. My body fell forward upon the padded board, and with a

force that may not be expressed in words, Murtagh forced his thumbs upon my maimed back!

And now, what can be said of what I endured in the one fleet second of time?

Let a reader fancy a blunt spear grinded many inches into his ailing spine-bone by a great knight upon a massy, galloping charger.

Let fire seem to play, not only upon the wound in his back, but also adown cords in all his limbs.

Let, then, the whole body, tingling to its remotest fibre and helpless in respect of its weight, appear to be of two parts, one of which hath suddenly been broken off from the others, by (as it were) a thunderbolt.

Then, let him seem to sink away into space and darkness, all on fire with agony and burning strain, and with the sound of a long singing note in his ears!

All that!

And yet he will not know what Martyn Fallon, late the crippled scrivener, felt—by just such difference as five years of pain and a weary numbness had made him more prone to suffering!

But the awakening hath been forestalled by one word in the last sentence; and there is little more to be said except "God is good!"

For I am crippled no longer!

Murtagh hath forced back into his proper alignment that spine-bone which had been displaced all these years!

When I came to my wits, I was face down upon a new, hard trestle, and they were fomenting my back with very hot wine.

There was a tingling there, and a twitching of my limbs; but I knew before Murtagh spoke that what he hastened to say was true.

"Dear Martyn," murmured he, "God hath glorified Himself in you this day! Your back is sound now, except for what some little time will do for it. And so, let us pray!"

Which, the Monk Apothecary leading, we very earnestly did.

Once, a little thereafter, I believe I fainted; but day by day I have known of no hindrance to my cure.

I have such sleep as never since my maiming.

I raise either leg wholly from the trestle without pain. I turn over easily, but at first with aid from ropes and bars cunningly placed for me by Murtagh, from side to side.

And this morning, the year being at its last days, I wrote this, having but now stood quite strongly, unaided, for these many minutes! Jubilate Deo!

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIRST

THE JOY AND THE CHANGE IN MOINA, BECAUSE OF THE RETURNED POWERS OF MARTYN—THE SACRED BONES WHICH MURTAGH HAD STUDIED—THE IMITATIONS OF LITTLE JACOB ONCE MORE

If, in the joy of it all, a new youth and beauty have come to my dear Aunt Vimbela, of the voice now sweeter than ever, who shall tell of how it doth affect Moina?

Oh! the light that is in her eyes, the airiness in her step, the music that is ever on her lips!

But is that everything? I trow not!

To Martyn the cripple, Moina might have been sister, or mother even, for any coyness in ministering to him by the bedside in convenable ways, and at any hour.

But now, so't please you! what circumspection, what blushes when I say, "Dear Moina!" Of old it used to be:

"Ay, my poor Martyn, what can thy loving Moina do for thee?"

Now it is: "Yes, Martyn?—shall I call Aunt Vimbela to thee?" or such-like replies.

Nothing must I say, even by mine eyes, of that hope and longing which grow daily in my heart and body.

To press her fingers a week since, the dear fair hand which hath lain in mine for an hour of pain at a time, soft murmured words of love coming therewith, was to banish my loved one from the room for all of two days! Oh, forsooth as I gain the strength (which we none of us had dared hope for), I am supposed to need overt love the less.

And so I grow in wisdom as I grow in strength. I make no protest of my love. I choke down my tone of passion; I use no touch that tells of a man's feeling.

But who that hath never been crippled can know what it is to feel life where limbs were numbed and weak? And, oh, when I feign sleep, so that the woman who loves me (Lord be thanked) may be harmless deceived to steal to one's bed-foot, and gaze with glowing eyes upon a lover in whose cheek is the colour of unwonted strength! Ah! *I* have seen it! The close-clasped hands, the smiling lips forming passionate words over him who seemed to sleep; and when I have groaned as one lazily awaking, I have seen the face quick ordered to maidenly decorum, while the simple words have come calmly:

"Thou hast slept sound, good Martyn; and thine aunt hath a fine broth of a chicken for thee."

So it went on; and by the benefit of God, and Murtagh's ceaseless caring, I have become of such strength as now to walk about.

With hot sea-water thrice daily he laveth my back, where now is none pain; and while I lie a-face, he kneadeth the same, and doth nip and pinch the leg muscles, until that I shall cry out "Murther!" at times. With paste of a roasted sea-weed I am plastered. With a hand full of soft silk I

am rubbed to glowing after the nipping. And day in, day out, I see less of Moina!

. . . . . .

Once I asked Murtagh for the plain history of his studies for me.

Without a word, he passed above to his own garret, and brought down two strings of bones. One was that string of knuckle-bones which, at my desire, Moina had shown to me. The other I had never seen before.

"I once found a man's body in the Bog of Allen," said Murtagh. "Who shall say how many hundred year it had lain there? The skull-bone hath gained me many private matters by terrifying those who had guilt at heart—as indeed, who hath not?—when Jacob hath held it before his own weeny face under a black cowl, and I have called for a confession through my conch, in a distant-sounding voice.

"But I have here the spine-bones of that body, stripped of skin and flesh. I have mounted them on an iron rod; and between are pads of many cloths.

"Now, in thy poor back, my patient Martyn, this one of the bones was displaced to extent of one line and a shade more, say one tenth of the inch."

"No more, Murtagh? Hadst thou had my experience at the hands of the Apothecary, and thine own good self, together, thou wouldst have gauged the distance of that bone's default at full its own length! It seemed to move through three grinding fiery inches!"

Murtagh smiled and shook his head, showing me, on the bones, all that had been wrong with me, and all he had had to do to right things.

But in self-pity, and at seeing the real bones of a once-live man—and they being used as mine had once been—a faintness visited me; and Murtagh crooned over me as he laid me back upon my trestle, and gave me wine.

When I bettered, I said:

"What for, then, dear Murtagh, hast thou that innocent and ungruesome chain of identic bones, which, to my seeming, are from shins of cattle?"

"Oh, that!" and Murtagh laughed. "Why, forsooth, let me pore over these sacred relics of him that hath helped thee from his grave whenever I might, his highness Jacob must glower and vex himself if he might not mimic me, and do likewise! So, for sacrilege-prevention, and because my pads for gristles must not be disturbed, I gave the weeny man this chain of two dozen bones, whereon he exerciseth his great mind in the imitation of me, and so is content to leave these poor remains untampered with. The same shall I now give unto the earth with all pious observance; and over them thy life will surely be a daily sacrifice and oblation! There be that doubt the efficacy of prayers for the dead—"

"Into which dogma-matter shall we not go, Murtagh," said I. "But on every All Souls' Day that I am spared, if thou wilt show me where these poor bones lie at last in sacred rest, I shall thank God over them; and flowers laid above them may at least be types of my grateful thoughts to them, next after the other aspiration!"

"And we also will observe this custom, God helping us!" said my pious aunt, who, with Moina and her

mother, kneeled, as Murtagh reverently bore away the relics for burial in holy land.

The good God, He alone knoweth whether the owner of the bones had ever done as much good in his life as Murtagh (with a blessing) hath compassed in me, by his studying of them!

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SECOND

SOME LITTLE EFFORT IS MADE TO TAKE UP AGAIN THE SAD AND TANGLED HISTORY OF "THE SILKEN THOMAS"; BUT ART, EVEN IN THE HUMBLE CASE OF AN HISTORIAN, IS A JEALOUS MISTRESS; AND THE SCRIVENER, NO LONGER HELPED BY THAT MUSE, DRIFTETH INTO THE MERE LOVER! TUT! TUT!

With the better control of the country which very slowly followed the quelling of the Silken Thomas's rebellion, fell such prosperity to Moina's mother that she came thanking my Aunt Vimbela and Murtagh, and even me, for our roof, saying she and Moina would return to their own holding now.

And so it was.

Then came a new urgeance upon me to add strength to strength; for I could now only have the joy of seeing Moina by going to her home, as in the former days of my health and love.

Where will is, way is!

I passed the threshold unaided for the first time for five long years upon the New Year's Day of 1537.

In great prudence, and aided by a staff, I exercised with delight, and returned to my great chair, none worsted in any wise.

Every day I did more; and every day could have done more than I did.

. . . . . .

All was at calm as touching the poor prisoners. It was noised abroad that there might even be amnesty for the now-attainted young Earl. We may not be allowed to comfort him in any wise; but we hope all we can. Also, we dare to think that of the five Geraldines, his uncles, three at least may one day be returned, cautioned, to be a restored and loyal family under the Crown—even although the ancient prophecy which Murtagh hath fitted upon my case should, in that sole particularment, fail of completion.

By the middle of January I had cast away my staff, and all aids!

I walked quickly five miles to sign receipts for a property left me by a relation who had dealt in merchandise in great Dublin, who had never promised me any benefits; but whom I had thanked becomingly for a kind message upon my great recovery.

And returning, I saw MOINA afar off!

She would fain have turned aside; but in the fear to lose my chance I ran a distance. The which seeing, and wrought with fear of any injury to him whom she had so bravely and patiently loved in his helpless days, she returned to meet me.

"Oh, dear Martyn!" she cried aloud, "do not run. I shall not avoid thee, dear friend, for I am in fear of any injury to thee."

"Moina," I solemnly said, "this blessing of a restored

health of body to all of enjoyment that may mean strength and manhood will be less to me than the comfort I had as a cripple, if thou wilt not now, as then, be my comfort in chief!"

(Her precious words to reply are writ on tablets in my heart for mine own reading only.)

. . . . . .

From that hour, I had none more remembrance of weakness or pain.

Upon the 5th of February, and Feast of St. Agatha, the name-saint of Moina's mother, we were wedded in the Monastery of St. Francis, in Dublin—the same occasion being my first time to see the fair city, formerly called Eblana.

And truly, I that had been a "cripple of many years," even I danced at the wedding of the woman I loved that day and was content—only saying that although assuredly the Geraldines would return, I could not wait therefor through the time of the prophecy; and, indeed, the same would be falsified if they came back even in one hundred year!

There be two of the prisons in the great, sad Tower of London; and I know not in which was my Lord Thomas the longer a prisoner. One is the Beauchamp Tower, and the other, close by the Traitor's gate, is the Garden Tower. But who can say what all of gloom and weariness this vigorous young man suffered! There is proof in every word of his writing which I have seen, that his spirit was utterly broken. He gladly made friendships at last with

men, prisoners like himself, who would not have interested him had he been at his liberty.

The little child of one of the warders was beloved by him with all the hungry passion of an empty heart and life. He carved toys for him from the scant firewood. He invented games with strings on the hands for his amusement. Being entrusted, at his own desire, with some tools for the improvement of overworn steps, he was engaged in carving the letters of his name on a cornerstone, when he was haled forth to his awful death!

When the summons came, he found that he had been classed with two of his uncles, who, in the King's service, had withstood and opposed him. This made him hope that all would be pardoned together.

"Ah!" whispered he to a visitor, even that Revd. Thomas Abell (Chaplain to Queen Catharine) who had himself been earlier a prisoner there, and had likewise carved his name), "I am now to know the forgiveness of my sovereign Lord, the King's Grace! You see, Father, I have not finished my name-carving. It is not so pretty done even so far, as yours. But I am, with mine uncles, the King's loving servants. We will write his name in every heart in The Pale—ay, in Ireland itself! And so, I take my leave of mine unfinished name with joy!"

Somewhere in that great Tower the unfinished carving may stand even now. If so it be, then, inasmuch as it was never finished because of Henry's treacherous lying, it will plead, as long as men shall see it, against all false and murderous tyrants, with hatred, hissing, and curses! Amen! Amen!

Before another week had passed, we knew that, alas! the poor "Silken Thomas" and his five uncles had been done to death as traitors, upon a day less two before my marriage to Moina, even the 3rd day of February, 1537.

I may not dwell upon it more; for my heart is filled to overflowing with the joy of Moina's love!

And there is this farther: Murtagh hath felt that Vimbela and he can no more part or separate.

For she hath had a confidence placed in her, setting against that early story of Murtagh's parentage. His poor young mother had indeed died as hath been told, and in her loyalty to the man she loved had kept things concealed at his demand. But a true marriage had been made between them, and Murtagh's proper station was that of the inheritor of a third son in a noble house.

He will not hear of any steps to be taken to establish his rights. If Vimbela will marry him, he will live usefully, and eke out some private funds of his own by helping to teach in a school which I am to establish nearer to Dublin. If otherwise, then he will enter the Monastery of St. Francis, first as medical lay brother, and afterwards, if it may be, as a received monk.

But I know Vimbela loves him; and as I write, they walk, hand in hand, in the garbage garden beside the house; so I must look thither no farther.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-THIRD

WHICH TAKETH NOTE OF THE TOO LATE, BUT REAL, REPENTANCE OF THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF KILDARE, NÉE FORTESQUE, AND AT FIRST LADY OFFALY; AND AN HUMBLE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE MIGHTY HAPPINESS OF THE WRITER, WHO BLESSETH GOD THIS DAY THAT HE CAN, WITH THE BEST OF THEM, "MAKE HIS BOW" TO THE GENTLE READER

THERE hath passed a year since my last writing as above.

It hath been with much heart-tumult, and with much mixed feeling, that I have read over this poor page of history. I may one day traverse the sheets, to amend with later knowledge what may have been told wrongly with the imperfect acquaintance of the hour.

We hear that, too late, the young Countess of Kildare learned that she could wholly love her husband, and him only.

When, by the intercession of some powerful friends, certain deeds gave her plate and property from the estate of her late husband, she shook her beautiful head, and said she had no pleasure in the King's good bounty. She had failed in wifely duty and Christian charity to a man whom she might, in contrary case, have saved for the

King's service and his own, and for the giving of heirs direct to the great Family of which he was Head. She might have balanced the shame of her father's less accountable traitorhood thereby. She had missed her great opportunity in the world.

And so, the world being no more to her, she entered a nunnery of the very strictest class.

. . . . . .

If anything were needed to show me my Moina's tender heart, it would be seen when, as she hears of that sad heart-breaking, she tenderly taketh our brave and lusty boy all into her arms; and, bending over him with her eyes a-brimming, beckoneth me to her.

"What now, then, sweetheart?" I say.

"Ah, Martyn," she whispereth, the sound of tears in her voice of music, "the poor young Lady Kildare hath never had such a schooling as we have known!"

"How so, Moina mine?" I query, that she may the better have chance to deliver her heart of what is burthening it.

"*She* hath never seen her lover grow, from one helpless and pain-ridden, to stand beside his wife and child, sound and strong!"

"True, my sweet; and she never continued her love to the man of her heart, when all looked hopeless, to see her love his highest hope in all his hopeful life at last!"

"Above everything, Martyn, she hath never known what it is to feel baby hands upon her breast. May God and Our Lady comfort her!"

As I sigh for the fate of a high-born and generous man,

little Jacob, robed in white, and bearing roses which mean Love, entereth, and kneeleth in his daily wonder of our infant. I take the emblem.

But could even Love, the Magician, have mended the weirdness of a destiny such as that of "The Silken Thomas," even as regards the love of wife and children?

Who can tell?

Not I, at least!

And so, to Moina's gentle prayer, I murmur with a full heart:

"AMEN!"

THE END

APPENDIX

No. I.

Speech of Lord Deputy Skeffington, made in August on the Green at Mary's Abbey, Dublin, in reply to an Address of Welcome to the Earl of Kildare from Recorder Thomas Fitzsimons :—

"Mr. Mayor and Mr. Recorder,—You have at length this nobleman here present for whom you sore longed while he was absent. And after many storms by him sustained, he hath now, to the comfort of his friends, to the confusion of his foes, subdued violence with patience, injuries with sufferance, and malice with obedience. And such butchers as of hatred thirsted after his blood are now taken for outcast mastiffs, littered in currish blood.

"How well my master, the King, hath been of his gracious inclination affected to the Earl of Kildare (his back friend being, by his just deserts, weeded from His Majesty), the credit wherein this noble at present abideth, manifestly declareth. Wherefore it resteth that you thank God and the King for his safe arrival.

"As for his welcome, Mr. Recorder's courteous discourse, your great assemblies, your cheerful countenances, your willing meetings, your solemn processions, do so far show it as to minister me occasion on his Lordship's behalf rather to thank you for your welcome than to exhort you to any further courtesy."

No. II.

"The Great Curse," or, Excommunication of Lord Thomas Fitzgerald for the Murder of John, Archbishop of Dublin.

In the Name of God, Amen,—By the Authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, St. Patrick, the Apostle and Patron of Ireland, all other the Apostles and Company of Heaven; and by the Authority of our Mother Holy Church, and the Keepers of the spiritual jurisdiction of the Metropolitan See of Dublin, the same all being voide,—Whereas Thomas Fitzgerald, eldest son to Gerald, late Erle of Kildare, of malice pretensèd, not only procured John Telyinge and Nicholas Wafer to put violent hands upon The Most Reverend Father in God John Lord Alen of good memory, late Archbishop of the said See of Dublin, Primate of Ireland, taking him prisoner at Howth, within the Diocese of Dublin, and from thence conveying him to Artayne in the same Diocese, but also the same Thomas Fitzgerald, accompanied with John Fitzgerald, Oliver Fitzgerald, brother to the said late Erle, James Delahide, Edward Rorke, and divers other evil-disposed persons, most shamefully, tyrannously, and cruelly murdered and put to death the said Archbishop. For which execrable,

abominable, detestable, and damnable act, according to the prescripts and ordinances of the Holy Church, we publish and declare the said Thomas Fitzgerald . . . and all other which gave commendment, counsel, favour, help, and assistance, comfort, or consented to the same, or after the act committed did ratify, accept, approve, or willingly defend it, or succour or receive any such persons, to be excommunicated, accursed, and anathematized. And to the intent all Christian people may the rather take knowledge thereof, and avoid and loathe the danger of the same, we invocate and call in vengeance against the said Thomas Fitzgerald, and every of the persons aforesaid, the Celestial place of Heaven, with all the multitude of angels, that they be accursed before them, and in their sight as spirits condemned. And the devil do stand, and be in all their doings on their right hand, and all their acts be sinful and not acceptable before God. Be they, and every of them, cast out from the company of Christian people as damned creatures, and all that they shall do to be done in their damnable offence and sin. Let them be put out of their houses and mansions, which other men may take, and put to decay and ruin. Their labours to be frustrate from all goodness. Let no man be to them merciful, and their memory forever in the earth to be forgotten. God Almighty may rain upon them the flames of fire and sulphur to their eternal vengeance. And that they may clothe themselves with the malediction and high curse, as they daily clothe themselves with their garments. The water of vengeance may be in the inner parts of them as the marrow is in their bones. Be they and every of them girded with the girdles of malediction and of curses. Be they and every of them partakers with the wicked Pharo and Hero, Herod and Jude, the proditor of Jesu Christ, and with Dathan and Abiram, whom the earth swallowed quick. So may they descend into hell quick. Good Lord, send to them and every of them, hunger and thirst, and strike them and every of them with pestilence till they and every of them be consumed, and their generations clean radicated and delyted of this world, that there be no memory of them. Strike them, and every of them also with such leprosy that from the highest part of the head to the sole of their feet there be no whole place. Strike them also with madness, blindness, and voidness of mind, that they may palzie and be lame, also handle as blind men do in darkness. And furder, be they curst, and put from the company of all Christian people, for they cannot have pains according to their deserving. And by the authority aforesaid we do declare interdict the place where the said Archbishop was killed. Which interdiction we will to be observed according to the ordinances of Holy Church in this behalf. And likewise do inter-

dict all cities, lands, towns, castles, villages, all maner of chapells, and all the places wherein the said cursed persons been or any of them be, or at any time hereafter shall be, come, or resort unto,—willing and commanding all spiritual persons of this diocese and province of Dublin, upon pain of the law to cease from administering all Divine service as long as the said Thomas Fitzgerald, . . . James Delahide, . . . or any of the other said cursed persons, or any of them, shall be present, and so continue three day after their departure. And also by the same authority decree them, and every of them, to be deprived of all spiritual honors, dignities, offices, benefices, and all other ecclesiastical profits and commodities, whatsoever they be, which they now possess, and inhibit them and every of them to receive and accept any other like in time to come. Finally, by the same authority, we excommunicate and curse all persons, these, and in the cases which the law permitteth except which, after due knowledge of the execution of this sentence of The Great Curse, and specially the servants and familiars of the said cursed persons, that from henceforth shall do any service, keep company, familiarity, talk, commune, speak, aid, comfort, or succour the said Thomas Fitzgerald, . . . or any other present at the killing of the said Archbishop, giving commendment, counselling, favouring, helping, aiding, assisting, comforting, or consenting to the said murder, and either afterwards notefying, approving, or wilfully defending the said act, and all these which shall minister or give unto them, or any of them, meat, drink, water, fire, dress, their sustenance, or give any of them any maner of comfort or helpe. And to the terror and fear of the said damnable persons, we sign and figure that they be accursed of God, and their bodies given and committed unto the hands of Satan and Lucifer, we have rong these bells,—erect this cross with the Signe of Christ crucified. And also see these candelles light taken from the crosses,—so be the said cursed persons and rebellious murderers against the laws of God and our Mother Holy Church excluded and separated from the Light of Heaven, the fellowship of Angells and all Christian people, and shall be sent to the low darkness of fiends and damned creatures, among whom everlasting pains doth endure. And these three stones which we cast towards their inhabitations is done to the terror of them, that they may the sooner come to Grace in token of the vengeance which God took against them like cursed persons called Dathan and Abiram, being so detestable in the sight of God that the earth opened and swallowed them quick into hell. Yet trusting that our Saviour Jesu Christ of His infinite mercy may call them to grace of repentance and amendment of this execrable offence,—ye shall devoutly pray with us: "Revelabunt cæli iniquitatem," with Psalm "Deus Laud." Fiat! Fiat! Amen.

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